

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

READ'S RELIGION.

READ may or may not have been guilty of the Southend murder. It is a question which we are not called upon to discuss. He was tried by a judge and jury, found guilty, and sentenced to be hung; and, before the sentence was carried into execution, his case was carefully considered by the Home Secretary, who saw no reason for interfering with the regular course of the law. This will satisfy ordinary people, who may well believe that, if trial by jury has its imperfections, trial by newspaper is a great deal worse. There is, of course, very much to be said against capital punishment; but, after all, Read was not a person to excite much sympathy. His sordid life, reckless amours, and gross betrayal of his wife and children, mark him out as a peculiarly disgusting specimen of the *genus homo*.

It is not Read's guilt, but Read's religion, that we wish to consider. When he was arrested, the omniscient, but often fearfully lying, press stated that he was "a Freethinker." Subsequently he was represented as "an Agnostic." Had he been a Churchman, a Methodist, a Congregationalist, a Baptist, or even a Unitarian, the press would not have emphasised his religious denomination. But a Freethinker, an Agnostic, an Atheist, or a Secularist, is an object of special curiosity. If he goes wrong, it is thought to be the result of his principles. If a Christian goes wrong, it is an accident. Or is it that Christians going wrong is too common to excite interest, while the criminality of a Freethinker is so exceptional as to be surprising?

Since the execution of Read the enterprising press has been gathering its final mixture of fact and fiction, and some penny-a-liner has put the following paragraph into circulation:—

"When quite a young boy Read was placed in the choir of St. Mary's Chapel-of-Ease, Shadwell, and he remained there until his voice broke. He was brought up in the school as a pupil teacher. According to the rules, they were bound to give Bible lessons and religious instruction; but one master was a sceptic, and used to tell the pupil teachers they could please themselves whether they believed or not. He, it is said by relatives, lent Read a lot of literature casting doubts on the Bible, and so converted him to Agnostic views as well as two other youths. It was a great grief to his mother, and the family deeply regretted that James had all along adhered to those principles which they looked upon as the beginning of troubles."

It does not follow that there is much, if any, truth in this paragraph. But let us, for the sake of argument, admit its truth, and see what it amounts to.

Read was a choir boy. He was brought under religious influence in his boyhood. Yet he became a seducer, an adulterer, and a murderer in after life. This is not a very handsome testimonial to the value of religious education.

It cannot be said that his pious teachers did not have him long enough under their influence. He was with them until his "voice broke"—say at the age of fifteen or sixteen. By that time they should have made a saint of him. Perhaps they would reply that he was made of hopeless material. But that is a reflection on "the Creator."

Read became a pupil teacher, and then the trouble began. A wicked Agnostic appeared upon the scene, and

hinted that the young fellow need not believe all the contents of the Bible. *Very* wicked! No doubt. But who on earth, outside a lunatic asylum, *does* believe all the contents of the Bible? The day of plenary inspiration is past. Eminent divines are now teaching what was hinted to Read by that wicked (and nameless) Agnostic. Will the pupils of these eminent divines walk, trot, or run to the gallows? If not, why should such teaching be thought to have any connection with the career and fate of Read?

Read studied the books that wicked Agnostic lent him, and became an unbeliever. Every believer knows that is the first step to the scaffold. Still, we may ask why his friends regarded it as the source of all his troubles. They did not *know* of his troubles until after his arrest. He kept his intrigues a profound secret, leading a double life like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Evidently they have been reasoning *backward*—that is, if they have been reasoning at all. They have simply turned an inference into a fact of memory, which is a common occurrence in the process of self-delusion.

Thus far we have assumed the truth of this penny-a-liner's statements. We have now to say that they appear to be utterly false. Among the letters written by Read while under sentence of death, and printed in the London *Echo*, is one addressed to his brother Harry, from which we take the following extracts:—

"You may all satisfy yourselves that my murder, which is fixed for a fortnight hence to-day, and which I do not fear at all, is the sacrifice of a perfectly innocent life, which I do not now value at twopence, since I have learned the value of earthly so-called friendships and so-called 'Divine justice,' which permits such an outrage as this.

"There are, as you know, very many whom I have consistently served; and made many serious personal sacrifices for them; who now hold aloof from me as though I was the vilest creature on earth, and never deserved acknowledgment of past services; and then there is over all the 'Just God,' who serenely looks down upon the vilest, . . . that ever disgraced a Court of Justice, with as much unconcern as one who was not 'All-Powerful' and 'All-Just'—is not this enough to blunt, if not quite eradicate, any faith in God or man?"

These sentences came from Read's own pen, and are therefore more valuable than "the hair-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity." Certainly they do not reveal that he was an Atheist. The language is that of a man who believes—or has hitherto believed—in providence and divine justice. If he had disbelieved all this before, why should he express himself so bitterly? Atheists do not rail at God except by way of argument. Read only says that his position was enough to make him doubt the teachings of theology; and indeed it was so, if he knew himself to be innocent of the crime for which he was to be hanged. A man who was to be judicially murdered would have a remarkably robust faith if he retained any respect for "Providence."

We have given this matter more attention, perhaps, than it deserves; but we must sometimes condescend to the intellectual level of the devotees of religion, as it is necessary to meet their objections, even when they are foolish or frivolous. "Infidelity" or "unbelief," as the clergy call it, does not depend on the real or imaginary opinions of James Canham Read. Even if a real Atheist were hung, it would not prove anything in favor of the religion of Jabez Balfour.

G. W. FOOTE.

GOD'S SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS.

UNDER the title of *The Sanitary Code of the Pentateuch*, the Religious Tract Society has recently published the twenty-first of the volumes of "By-Paths of Bible Knowledge." The little book is written by the Rev. C. G. K. Gillespie, A.K.C., A.C.P., and its object, as stated by him in his preface, is to show that even in sanitary matters "the Divine Word is the best and earliest guide." While I should not for a moment think of denying that many of the laws attributed to Moses were eminently suitable to the Jews, I question both the terms, "best" and "earliest." After the divine fashion, take the last first. Ceremonial and sanitary regulations appear in the Egyptian sacred books, in the Hindu Vedas, the Chinese King, and the Persian Avesta, all of earlier date than the writings ascribed to Moses.

But the question of priority is of slight importance, as compared to that other one, "Is the sanitary code of the Bible really the best?" The most important of God's sanitary arrangements were those in regard to food. At any rate, they are given the first place in *The Sanitary Code of the Pentateuch*. Some of these regulations were doubtless wise, and suggested by the experience of the race. The prohibition of the camel, although it is wrongly described as dividing not the hoof (Lev. xi. 4), was a useful preservative of a much-needed animal, just as the sacredness of the cow in India has prevented its extermination in time of famine. But I may be permitted to doubt if the pig was originally interdicted from the ascertained insanitary character of pork. I think it at least possible that, as Mr. J. G. Frazer suggests in his *Golden Bough*, the prohibition arose from the pig having been a sacred animal, and therefore taboo. Sometimes the reasons given are absurd or false, as in the case of the hare, "because he cheweth the cud" (Lev. xi. 6). We are told: "All fowls that creep, going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you" (Lev. xi. 20), without being informed where these four-footed fowl may be found. Nor is it much consolation to be told (Lev. xi. 21, 22): "Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth. Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind." Four-footed beetles are as scarce as cockatrices, and grasshoppers as a diet may be more sanitary than satisfying.

God's sanitary laws appear only to have been for the benefit of his own peculiar people. Thus he lays it down (Deut. xiv. 21): "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien, for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God." Can a people, who thought they could safely give their diseased meat to strangers living among them, really have had the best sanitary code possible? The many regulations concerning plague and leprosy rather indicate the contrary. And what is to be said of the Christians who, at the present day, profess to regard such an ordinance as this as divine?

Two prohibitions must be noted as indicating rather superstition than sanitation. These are those of fat and of blood. "It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations and throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood" (Leviticus iii. 17). This divine law is preceded by the declaration, "All the fat is the Lord's." The superstition attached to blood is shown by many instances. To consecrate priests they were ordered to "kill the ram and take of his blood and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about" (Exodus xxix. 20). Their garments were also to be sprinkled with blood. When the Lord slew all the firstborn of Egypt he saved the Jews because he saw the blood upon the lintel (Exodus xiii. 23). God's people were prohibited from tasting, not from shedding, the sacred fluid. Yet we read of Saul's army that "the people slew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground, and the people did eat them with the blood" (1 Samuel xiv. 32), much as the Abyssinians cut off living steaks. The passage shows that the

laws ascribed to Moses were not in use, if in existence, in the days of Saul.

The Rev. C. G. K. Gillespie, A.K.C., A.C.P., is great on the subject of disinfection. He suggests that "in the ashes of the heifer (Numbers xix.) there may be a premonition of the use of animal charcoal as a disinfectant." He really ought to have explained the process described in Leviticus xiv. 49-53 as the divine law for cleansing a house where the plague had been. Here is the passage, which I transcribe at length because it so thoroughly illustrates the mixture of superstition and experience which characterises the divine sanitary code:—

"And he shall take to cleanse the house two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. And he shall kill the one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. And he shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet. But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean."

Does Mr. Gillespie really think this the best method of disinfection? Would he actually kill a bird and sprinkle his own house seven times with the blood, and send another one flying to make an atonement for the house—or, as Mr. Frazer tells us, the ancient belief was—to carry away the disease? I should also like Mr. Gillespie to explain why it is more impure for a woman to bear a daughter than a son. Here is the law of God on the subject laid down in Lev. xii. :—

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child, then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying three-score and six days."

God may be forgiven much on the ground that he wrote in days of ignorance for a barbarous people; but this insult to motherhood is unworthy of a savage. Uncleanliness, as I have explained in my *Bible Studies*, was connected with the idea of taboo. The woman at certain times was taboo, just like the ark of Jahveh. It was death to enter the holy of holies, or even to make the holy oil of the priests (Numbers iv. 15; 2 Samuel vi. 6, 7; Numbers xvii. 13; xviii. 3; Exodus xxx. 38). Defilement by breaking taboo was mostly imaginary. It was incurred by touching persons ceremonially unclean (Lev. xxii. 5, 6), or unclean things, such as hare, oysters, an owl, or a swan (Lev. xi. 24-27). Being unclean in the modern sense of the word—that is, being actually dirty or filthy—does not seem to have been mentioned by God as an offence needing purification or penalty. He never mentions soap, combs, ventilation, filters, or sewers, any more than carbolic acid or permanganate of potash.

The Jews have rarely considered the question of overcrowding in their sanitary arrangements. God certainly did not. He ordered a tabernacle the size of 10 cubits by 30, or 18 feet by 54, for the whole assembly of 603,550 adult warriors, besides old men, women, and children! This was almost as insanitary as the arrangements of the ark, where Noah and seven others must have been constantly employed in clearing away the excretions of every known species of animal, with only one window for ventilation! God, however, showed some concern for the cleanliness of these warriors, every one having to go outside the camp (supposed to be twelve miles square) for the necessities of nature, while no such provision was made for the women and children (Deut. xxiii. 12, 13). Altogether, his sanitary arrangements, from a modern standpoint, must be pronounced somewhat insanitary. J. M. WHEELER.

It is told of one of the most austere bishops of the American Episcopal Church that once, when catechising a class of boys, he called attention to the disobedience of Jonah and the consequent punishment. To enforce the lesson, he said in his stern way: "And now, boys, how did Jonah feel when the whale swallowed him?" One bright lad answered: "I think he felt down in the mouth."

WHY SHOULD WE BE GOOD?

(Concluded from page 780.)

EMERSON has said: "The mind of this age has fallen away from theology to morals. I conceive it to be an advance." Undoubtedly this is true, for the intellect of the age is more than ever finding its justification for being good in the results of action, rather than in the commands of creeds and dogmas. The inspiration to goodness is now recognised as coming from earth, not heaven; from man, not God. As a recent writer well puts the fact: "It is not a belief in an arbitrary personal God which ennobles a life. Most of the burglars and murderers, most of the unjust monopolists and cruel sweaters, believe in 'God.' It is goodness that ennobles a life, and goodness is not necessarily associated with godliness. It is not a hope of heaven that makes a life beautiful. Many who believe in heaven are very hard to live with here. It is gentleness, kindness, considerateness, friendliness, love, that make a life beautiful; and these qualities are not necessarily associated with a hope of heaven. It is not piety that wins esteem. There are many pious persons whom you would not trust with a five pound note. It is fair dealing, honesty, and fidelity that win esteem; and they are not associated with piety."

Darwin, in his *Descent of Man*, gives potent reasons why we should live good lives. He points out that the possession of moral qualities is a great aid in the struggle for existence; that people with strong moral feelings are more likely to win in the race of life than persons who are destitute of such feelings. Goodness has in itself its own recommendation, inasmuch as it secures for its recipients peace of mind, temperance in their habits, and a sense of justice in their dealings with others. Men of honor, whose lives are regulated by the principle of integrity, furnish the best of all reasons for being good. They are happy in the consciousness of the nobility of their own nature, and they derive consolation from the knowledge that they render valuable service to others by the dignified example they set, and the exalted lives they live. Those who can see the worth of virtue and of truth in human character are imbued with a spirit of emulation; they desire to be associated with a superior order of society. Such members of the community can readily see that without "confidence and trust" the commercial world would collapse. The same principle applies to the whole of human life, for it is not simply that "honesty is the best policy," but that it is the only policy which will secure a tranquil state of existence. Rectitude is the source of self-reliance in life and at death. Men who are able to distinguish the good from the bad are attracted by honor and refinement. They shun malignity and vulgarity, and are repelled by what is vicious and demoralising. Men should be good because goodness qualifies them for friendship, and wins for them the esteem of the best of their kind. Further, it awakens within them a sense of what is most fitted to enable them to adopt an elevated mode of living. They become practical believers in that which is just and useful, and they are thereby inspired to strive to realise their ideal born of newer and higher perceptions of truth. Let the lover of goodness once be admitted into the presence of the intellectually gifted and morally heroic, and life will present to him a new aspect. When we read of Plutarch's heroes; of Greece with her art and her literature; of Rome with her Cicero and her Antoninus; and of the muster-roll of men and women whose memories are surrounded with a halo of intellectual brilliancy and ethical glory, we no longer regard the world as the habitation only of moral invalids and of mental imbeciles. On the contrary, a higher faith in the potency and grandeur of human goodness is evoked, exalted thoughts are inspired within us, and we are induced to believe that goodness will be more than ever appreciated for its own sake, and that virtue will be honored and revered for its intrinsic merits.

While admitting that the moral brightness of life is somewhat tarnished by the base, the brutal, the suicidal, and the insane characters that are still found in our midst, we believe in the law of progress and the work of reform. We recognise a powerful motive for being good in the belief that such conditions may be produced that shall tend to remove depravity and to establish righteousness. Such disasters as the cholera, and numerous other epidemics that

once made uncontrolled havoc upon society, have been checked by the application of suitable scientific remedies; why, then, should not moral evils be made to yield to judicious treatment? When men understand that moral law is as certain as physical law, and as necessary to be obeyed if we are to have a healthy state in human ethics, the reformation of the community will be capable of achievement. Whether we regard man as the creature or the creator of circumstances, or as both, it is certain that his organism and its environment act and re-act upon each other. While intelligence indicates the best way to pursue in life, it is obvious that circumstances must be such as to permit of our pursuing that way. From what we know of human nature, it appears to us necessary that it should be surrounded with inducements that have the power to draw out the best that is in it. It has been well said that man is a bundle of habits; therefore moral forces become strong as they become a part of the habit of life. We cannot reasonably expect the State to be ruled by right and love unless these virtues exist in the citizens. No nation has ever attempted to live like a society of friends—without goals, policemen, etc.—because the idea of moral duty has been only partially realised. In proportion as we properly understand the nature of goodness, and regulate our lives by its genius, so shall we be governed by ideas instead of by force. The misfortune of our present societarian condition is the difficulty attending its improvement. Although, like trees, we grow and expand from within, there seems, as it were, an iron band around us, that prevents our free expansion and our full growth. The quality of our acts may be good in a certain degree, but it is not of the required strength. The quality has been impoverished through neglect and theological adulteration; and what is now required is persistent and intelligent conduct, that shall purify life, and rid it of the legacy of the ignorance, the folly, and the superstition of the dark past. Our hope is in purification; we want earnestness and candor to take the place of the apathy and hypocrisy which have so long held sway. Then real goodness will illuminate the hearts of men, and virtue will shed its lustre upon the emancipated humanity of the world.

Why should we be good? The answer, from a Secular standpoint, is: Because goodness, in itself, is the basis of all true happiness; it is the progenitor of peace, order, and progress. To be good is a duty we owe to society as well as to ourselves. In virtue alone are to be found those elements that ennoble character and exalt a nation. The unselfish love of goodness, and the desire to acquire a practical knowledge of the obligations of life, have hitherto been too much confined to the few, while the many have neglected to strive to realise the highest advantages of existence. The cause of this misfortune is not difficult to discover. It is apparent in the radical evil underlying the whole of the theological creeds of Christendom—namely, an objection to concentrate attention on the present life, apart from considerations of any existence "hereafter." The mistake in the theological world is that its members regulate their conduct and control their actions almost exclusively by the records of the past or the conjectures of a future. Their rules of morality, their systems of theology, and their modes of thought are too much a reflex of an imperfect antiquity. Those who cannot derive sufficient inspiration from this source fly into the fancied boundaries of another world—a world which is enveloped in obscurity, and upon which experience can throw no light. History has been subverted by this theological error from its proper purpose. Instead of being the interpreter of ages, it has become the dictator of nations; instead of being a guide to the future, it is really the master of the present. The proceedings of bygone times are thus made the standard of appeal in these. The wisdom of the first century is regarded as the infallible rule of the nineteenth. The watchword of the Church is "As you were," rather than "As you are." Christian theology hesitates to recognise active progressive principles, but holds that faith was stereotyped eighteen hundred years ago, and that all subsequent actions and duties must be shaped in its mould. Secularism prefers the healthy and progressive sentiments thus expressed by J. R. Lowell:—

New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward,
Who would keep abreast of truth.

CHARLES WATTS.

THREATENED TYRANNIES.

Was it not Chamfort who wrote that one of the worst features of slavery was that it degraded the slave to the point of making him love it? And is the same not equally true of the numerous tyrannies and injustices that are inflicted on communities at the present day? Indifferentism has become such a pronounced trait in the character of the English people in regard to all things which do not directly affect them, and the assertiveness of people with fads, prejudices, and narrow sympathies has of late been so marked, and, it may be added, attended with success, that a serious danger threatens the liberty of citizens, and a terrible menace confronts their independence. It may be argued that the disinclination of any individual to concern himself with the public administration of affairs is a sufficient excuse for any discomfiture he may afterwards have to endure; and it may further be pointed out that those who devote so much time and labor to what they conceive to be the public interest are entitled to have their schemes and projects carried into execution by virtue of their enthusiasm for the well-being of their indolent fellow-creatures. Without disparaging the efforts of those who spend their days and nights on the public stage of life, endeavoring to improve those things that be, it is incumbent, at the present juncture of affairs, to insist that the government of the people shall not be shaped by the extreme ideas of any particular set of reformers, pseudo or otherwise. It is a mere platitude to observe that the minority have rights; but it is well to remember that, in the instances of gross mismanagement of certain public matters, interference with private concerns, and abuse of delegated powers, which for some time have been uppermost in people's minds, it has happened that the majority have had their liberties infringed, and the minority have ruled with more rigidity and implacability than could be credited to the most confirmed autocrat.

Such occurrences may be said to be inevitable when government is placed on an electoral basis. Representative administrators are open to influences from all quarters, and, as the powers which place them in their positions possess also the alternative of deposing them, should they fail to act in any particular line of policy, they are often but the mere tools of private schemers, and are destitute of all judicial qualifications. This illegitimate control is even more likely to be exercised by extremists; and it is generally on the recommendations of hobbyists and faddists that elected local governing bodies conduct their operations. In such a way are numberless petty tyrannies created; the busy-bodies, though numerically unimportant, being able to wield their influence by their familiarity with the art of "pulling the strings." When a move of a less dexterous and more barefaced nature has been performed, there goes up a spasmodic shout of indignation from the oppressed, which gradually dies away in a groan of martyrdom, but of a martyrdom that has no beneficent consequences. Deep in the hearts of the people there lie rankling the pains of undeserved castigation, unnecessary limitation, ludicrous prohibition, and cruel regulation; and yet the ever-increasing burdens are borne with a demeanor approaching serenity. Cranks and crotcheteers may weave their webs of iron round the liberties of the people, may dictate days for fetish-worship and times for gloom—even rob them of what little pleasurable relaxation from labor they obtain—and the only protests are a few hysterical shouts and a few ink-slung petitions.

In the matter of public amusements we have seen a desire for repression introduced, which bids fair to make the existences of many more weary and sad than they are already. There has been witnessed the sight of a handful of prying nonentities—having no tittle of sympathy with, but being utterly opposed to, what they profess their wish to reform—doing their best to limit the opportunities for mental recreation, on the ground, forsooth, that the recreation is not in unison with the purity ideas of their Bethels and mothers' meetings. It hardly seems credible that in this land, with its much-vaunted freedom, half-a-dozen irresponsible masculine females and she-men can meet in a back parlor and arrange plans for the restriction of a city's amusements, and that they are able to force—or is it by mutual understanding?—a responsible body of governors to accept *in toto* their program. This, however, is what is being done, and done by people who are the least qualified

to deal with the subject. At a similar rate, it will not be long ere every citizen will be compelled to order his going out and his coming in—his conduct when he is out, and his behavior when he is in—in accordance with the moral conceptions of the chapelite and the purity-monger. To drink will be a sin; to make merry a penal offence; such enormities as singing and dancing will be made punishable with banishment; and the only diversions of life will be the mild exhilaration of a tea-fight and the feeble titter of the missionary meeting. From which may all good Englishmen pray, "Good Lord deliver us!"

In other departments the so-called reforming propensity of the age is making itself felt by disturbing a condition of things which, if not perfect, is far more desirable than the state which is sought to be set up. Bigotry, born of ignorance; intolerance, begotten of selfishness; and persecution, out of avarice, are the main weapons with which the crusade against the secular interests of the people is being fought. Repression and prohibition are the only solutions which these dabblers in social morality can discover for the alleviation of evil, though, were they allowed a free hand in their reckless expedition, their methods for cure would turn out to be infinitely worse than the disease. Before the management of public affairs is formally handed over to the new moralists, the street preachers, and special revivalists, and the people are compelled to subject themselves to puritanical laws and superstitious observances, the credentials of these self-appointed rulers should be investigated, and their abilities for their tasks inspected. It is decidedly curious to notice that it is those who are advertised for their virtues and known by their purity who are the very people that are exhibiting such fiendish delight in uncovering the sores of humanity, and, by exposing them, causing their pestilential germs to be scattered broadcast. It is strange that those whose innocence has been looked upon as their especial shield should be found to be so much interested in the knowledge of subjects which were understood to be tabooed in the sacred precincts of the sewing meeting. It is yet more wonderful that such should desire to supersede others in the control of matters so difficult for adjustment, and should place their amateur experience before that of men of the world. In Charles Kingsley's *Yeast* there is a passage very applicable to the "vigilants" of the present day, to whom the words should be respectfully dedicated. A conversation between Lancelot and Tregarva introduces an apology for Miss Honoria's ignorance of worldly wickedness. "Suppose, sir," Tregarva says, addressing Lancelot, "when Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, that all the devils had come up and played their fiend tricks before them, do you think they'd have seen any harm in it?" "I really cannot tell," answers Lancelot. "Then I can, sir," rejoins Tregarva. "They'd have seen no more harm in it than the harm already in themselves, and that was none. A man's eyes can only see what they've learnt to see."

To come back more particularly to the subject of public entertainments. As provided at present by caterers of amusement, they may not meet with general approval. Some may protest that their tendencies are not morally elevating; others may argue that they do not seek for ethical essays from the stage, but rather desire diversion which, for the time, will transport them from the perpetual whirl and worry of life. Anyhow, the attempted restriction of amusements and recreations, in no way too varied or numerous already, should be met with vigorous resentment; and the fact of the attack proceeding from such a quarter as it does should spur the efforts of all who do not want the world made more gloomy than it is, and ruled by melancholy parsons and morose Methodist class leaders. Let these threatened tyrannies be at once exploded, and then there need be no fear of the people being degraded by them to the degree of subjection, or the point of cringing affection.

FRED. WILSON.

The dim and shadowy outlines of the superhuman deity fade slowly away before us, and as the mist of his presence floats aside we perceive, with greater and greater clearness, the shape of a yet grander and nobler figure of him who made all gods and shall unmake them. From the dim dawn of history, and from the inmost depth of every soul, the face of our father Man looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says, "Before Jehovah was I am!"—*W. K. Clifford, "The Bearing of Morals on Religion."*

A FREETHOUGHT MARTYR.

(An Address delivered before the American Secular Congress, at Madison Hall, Chicago, on Oct. 26, 1894.)

BY PROFESSOR LEON LEWIS, M.D.

(Continued from page 781.)

IN 1572 Bruno was promoted to the priesthood, and transferred to the convent of St. Bartholomew in the city of Compagna, where he said his first mass. From St. Bartholomew he went to a number of other convents in the province of Naples, officiating in all, but making no long stay in any, and at length, after three years, returning to the convent of Saint Dominicus.

And here, as a priest, he began speaking and writing in such a way as to show that he had outgrown the beliefs of his youth and those of the convent in which he was living. His associates had no difficulty in seeing that his opinions were rapidly growing heterodox, and extending to all subjects and in every direction. Getting into conversation one day with a certain Lombardian friar of his order, the question of Arianism came up between them, and the friar denounced the Arians as fools, declaring that they did not know enough to express their articles of belief. Bruno responded that the Arians might indeed be lacking in scholastic language, but that they knew very well how to express their doctrines clearly, the substance of which was, after all, that the generation of the son was an act of nature, and not a miracle of the spirit.

It is easy to see how these and similar utterances furnished promptly the wool for a second web of accusations against Bruno, and this time the matter became serious, as the accuser was no longer the master of the novices, but was the Provincial Father himself, or the head of the order. The danger was further intensified by the fact that Giordano was now a priest, and that his doubt extended to several of the principal dogmas of the Church; as also by the fact, which there is no denying, if we may judge by the literary labors which occupied him at this time, that he had not hesitated to express his views with the greatest boldness and freedom.

WENT FROM NAPLES TO ROME.

Hearing that measures were to be taken against him, and that his career as a novice was being raked up to aggravate the charges which were to figure in the new prosecution, he resolved to withdraw himself from these proceedings by a sudden departure. He left Naples accordingly, going to Rome, where he arrived towards the close of 1576. He had been there but a few days, however, when he learned that the documents concerning him had been forwarded to the capital, and that his prospects had been further darkened by the finding of a forbidden book he had left behind him. Perceiving, therefore, that his situation had become critical, he exchanged his priestly garb for ordinary attire, and fled precipitately from Rome, entering upon a life of wandering and hazard.

Northward, along the west coast of Italy, journeyed Bruno, passing through Civita Vecchia, Pisa, and Spezia, and so reaching Noli, to the westward of Genoa. He does not appear to have entered the latter city, either because the plague was raging there, or for some other reason, such as the paucity of schools, booksellers, and printing establishments, in which he stood a chance of getting something to do. In Noli he remained five months, giving readings and lessons in grammar, and then proceeded to Savona, where he tarried fifteen days only, going from there to Turin. Here, as he presented himself at one of the gates of the city, with fever in his veins, desolation in his heart, and his features worn with want and fatigue, not to speak of his ragged garb, he was repulsed by the custodian, under a suspicion of bringing the plague with him, from which Turin had remained comparatively free. Nothing remained for him but to embark on the Po, and descend the river to Venice, which he did.

At that time this splendid and monumental city, which he now first looked upon, must have seemed startlingly squalid and deserted to him, as the plague was raging, and had already carried off a large portion of its inhabitants.

The survivors were all a prey to apprehension, discomfort, and gloom. The schools were closed, and nearly all business had been suspended, or was carried on in a limited

and irregular manner, with the exception of the undertakers. In Venice Bruno remained a couple of months, during which, to gain a little money, he wrote and published a book which he called *The Signs of the Times—Dei Segni dei Tempi*. From Venice he went to Padua, where he encountered some friars of his own order whom he knew, and who counselled him to assume his priestly attire. The thing was neither new nor singular in those days, there being more than forty thousand friars in Italy who lived outside of their convents; and later, when he had reached Bergamo, he acted upon these counsels. His next move was to Milan, and from there he returned to Turin, crossed the Swiss Alps, and proceeded by way of Chambery to Geneva, where he arrived in the beginning of 1579.

At this point I would like to touch upon the authors and studies which had occupied our wanderer during the ten or twelve years preceding, and which had entered not a little into his own weaning from the Church; but the time at our disposal forces me to leave them unnoticed.

The stay of Bruno in Geneva, which lasted five months, was not without certain experiences and relations, into which it would be interesting to enter if our space permitted. Calvin was at that date supreme there, and murder in the name of religion a matter of every-day occurrence. This fact would have been in itself enough to render Bruno's sojourn there unpleasant; but he had also to take into account the circumstance that his pay from a printing establishment in which he had found work was not sufficient to feed and clothe him.

PROCLAIMED PROFESSOR AND DOCTOR.

The next refuge of Bruno was Lyons, where he remained a month, without notable results, and then went to Toulouse. Here he resumed the sort of lessons and readings he had given in Noli, and his fortunes soon began to brighten. The post of Ordinary Reader of Philosophy becoming vacant in the University of Toulouse—the second in France—a concourse was opened to fill it, and in this contest Bruno carried off the prize, thus being proclaimed professor and doctor in the most legitimate manner. This success was followed by a series of public discussions, in which he acquired new honors; but he at length wearied of them, or became ambitious of a wider field, and towards the end of 1581 he bade adieu to Toulouse, proceeding to Paris.

Here he found the plague raging, as in so many other cities he had visited, and for awhile gave all his attention to his writings and researches, the result of which was the publication of several of his most noted books in rapid succession, all with the date of 1582. In due course, however, he appeared on the rostrum, his titles from the University of Toulouse giving him the right to teach publicly; and it was not long before his themes and his eloquence attracted the attention of the literary and scholastic centres of the city. A chair in the Sorbonne was offered him, which he refused, because it covered an obligation of attending mass, and the King, Henry III., expressed a desire to make his acquaintance, with the result that very pleasant and friendly relations were at once established between them.

Perhaps it was at this period of his life that Bruno reached the highest pinnacle of his personal popularity and material prosperity. The most noted persons in the land were proud to exchange a word with him or do him honor. He wrote and debated with a vigor that was surprising. He spoke Latin, Spanish, French, and Italian, besides having a fair knowledge of Greek. He was of medium size, but snugly built, and as straight as a candle, with a thin and pale countenance, a thoughtful bearing, a gaze at once lively and sad, and hair and beard between black and chestnut. He was quick and ready of speech, brilliant in imagery, which was heightened by vivid gestures, and had the most urbane and gentle of manners. He was amiable and humorous in his conversation, like all the natives of southern Italy, and readily adapted himself to the tastes and habits and wishes of others. He was open and frank with both friends and foes, and just as prone to wrath as he was opposed to rancor or vengeance.

(To be continued.)

A school-girl, saying her catechism, was asked who her "ghostly enemy" was. She replied, "God." (Was the child altogether mistaken?)

A REAL CURSE AND A SHAM BLESSING.

WHEN Adam fell, so runs the tale,
 Jehovah cursed the whole creation,
 And sentenced man to weep and wail,
 And win his bread by perspiration.

God's heart grew hard when Adam fell ;
 He swore 'twould ne'er be soft and limber,
 Until he sent his son to hell,
 By means of Jews, some nails, and timber.

We're told that thus God's youngster took
 Away the curse of man's punishment.
 (See God's successful, well-known book,
 "My Salad Days"—the first edition.)

But, quite in vain, Christ's death has been,
 Despite dogmatic Paul's epistles,
 For *legless* serpents still are seen,
 And still the ground grows "thorns and thistles."

Although the curse *at once* did prove
 A blight on earth in every feature,
 The death of God did not remove
 A single blight from any creature.

Since Adam's fall cursed man and beast
 With *fleshy* ills—*Yah knew no others*—
 Christ's death should surely, at the least,
 Have raised the travail curse from mothers.

In spite of Christ, there still exist
 The fruits of Adam's condemnation ;
 For sin and toothache still persist,
 And bread's still won by perspiration.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ADAM AND EVE.

A PROFESSOR in the Boston University asserts that woman's place in the home is only a secondary one ; that man's is first, his will paramount, even in the home. He declares that, where two ride one steed, one must ride behind, and that one must be woman. Why? The reason is very profound. Because "Adam was first created, then Eve ; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression."

Now it is about as sensible to treat "Gulliver" or "Cinderella" as historic characters as to make such claims for "Adam" and "Eve." And every fairly-instructed professor in a modern university knows perfectly well that it is about as scientific to talk of the *first* man and the *first* woman as it is to pretend to give the family history of the *first* male and female hippopotamus.

The trouble is that almost no women have made this discovery. It is said that in a certain negro tribe the men once contrived a fine plan for frightening women into what they conceived to be a state of wifely humility. They formed a secret society, and claimed to have very intimate acquaintance with the supreme power of the universe. They showed signs and wonders to confirm their pretensions and authority ; and they constructed a hollow giant of frightful aspect, who dragged insubordinate wives forth by night, and administered condign punishment to the victims paralysed by terror. This awe-inspiring creation of the husbands rejoiced in the title of Mumbo-Jumbo, and his very name long served to reduce the sex not in the secret to silence and submission.

But, in course of time, the women, happily, began to be a little sceptical. She who hesitates may be lost, but she who doubts is saved. Doubt is the beginning of knowledge. Inspired by doubt, the women turned upon Mumbo-Jumbo and investigated him, and that creature of straw thenceforward had for them no terror.

Now it is necessary for women to discover for themselves the general Mumbo-Jumbo of the Adam whom, it is pretended, reduced all Eves to a state of secondariness and subjection. I shall doubtless pretty often repeat the statement that woman's fall into such condition is of comparatively recent date (considering the age of the human race), and that it was entirely due to a change from matriarchal to patriarchal marriage in a war-like state of society. But it needs more than a little repetition, as this truth has to overtake and overcome the fallacy, so widespread, of the myth of the Garden of Eden.

Singularly enough, that myth itself bears witness to the earliest form of marriage (in which woman was perfectly independent of husbandly control or rule) in the admission that man originally left his tribe to join the tribe of his wife

(Genesis ii. 24), though by the time the myth left their hands the original reason for the custom had been forgotten, and our Adamic reason invented by the Israelites. The uncritical bent of the ancient Israelitish mind is shown in the fact that they published, side by side, two stories, one of which declares that man (or Ish, as the Hebrew has it), male and female, was created simultaneously, the sexes equal in power and authority, while the other declares that male man was created first, and female man was afterwards built up around a portion of male man's anatomy.

ELLEN BATTELE DIETRICK.

ACID DROPS.

THE Matabele were half exterminated by Christians, who have taken possession of their land. Lobengula died of hardship and privation, like a hunted animal. And now comes the crowning irony. Lobengula's sons have been sent to Capetown, where they are to be educated—as Christians !

Appeals are still made on behalf of the "Liberator" victims. £44,000 has already been subscribed, but more is wanted. Pious swindlers like Balfour, Wright, and Hobbs go to work on a grand scale. It costs thousands of pounds merely to plaster up the worst wounds they inflict. It was only their reputation for piety that enabled them to prolong their imposture. Another curious fact is that Dissenting ministers were their most active and enterprising agents. Somehow or other, the Nonconformist Conscience goes to sleep when it is not looking after other people's morality.

A correspondence on capital punishment has been going on in the London *Echo*, and the following are the editor's observations upon it : "As usual, the Christian Scriptures are cited to vindicate the gallows. There is G. O. Warren, a pronounced Freethinker, asking, in the name of Christianity, for the abolition of capital punishment, and here are Christians of the type of R. E. Hope and Henry Dann defending capital punishment. A majority of Freethinkers, like G. O. Warren, would abolish the gallows ; a majority of Christians, like R. E. Hope and Henry Dann, are determined to maintain it. The gallows will fall, nevertheless."

Mr. Henniker Heaton (says the *Westminster Gazette*) tells the following story of a missionary who went to Queensland :—He resolved to teach the natives a higher Christianity. He said, "We will have no more gifts—no more blankets, rum, and tobacco." King Billy, with a brass plate announcing his dignity, approached the missionary and inquired, "No more blankets?" The missionary replied, "No." "No more baccy?" "No." "No more rum?" "No." "Then," said King Billy, drawing himself up to his full height, and looking scornfully at the missionary : "All right, good day. No more Alleluias !"

The newly-discovered Syriac Gospels have been dealt with in the *Freethinker*, and now we see a paragraph upon them in *Reynolds's Newspaper*, which has of late displayed a Freethought tendency. Referring to the statement in the Syriac "find," that Joseph begat Jesus, our contemporary says : "If the manuscript be correct, and with one or two exceptions it is like the other early manuscripts, the theory of the Holy Ghost goes by the board, and the divinity of Christ is at an end. It is the duty of those who found their faith upon the Christian religion to make inquiries as to the basis upon which their belief rests."

Israel Ellis, a Jew from Russia, in the *New York Sun* (Nov. 25), ably defends his race against the charge of lowering the standard of Christian morality in Russia, made by a Mr. Sucrow. He asks : "Who corrupted the morals of the Russian nobility, to the inner and sacred circles of which the wicked Jews had no access? Was it a 'cursed Jew' who led away Catherine II. from the path of honor and duty? Did any 'damned Jewish' blood flow in the veins of Poniatofsky, the Prince, Soltikoff, the Count, and Suboff, the private soldier of her Majesty, Catherine II.?"

Mr. Ellis says : "During the reign of Nicholas I. children, nay, little babies, were torn away from the breasts of their mothers in order to bring them up in the Greek Catholic faith ; men and women were burned with hot irons for refusing to worship the saints of that Church ; and yet Mr. F. E. O. Sucrow has the audacity to state that the 'Greek Catholic Church' has nothing to do with the persecution of Jews, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and other religious sects."

There is no syllabus of religious instruction in the schools under the Board at Balmaclellan, Kirkeudbrightshire, and

the Rev. Mr. Cuthill, who sits on the Board, is in constant dispute with his colleagues, whom he accused of "deliberate falsehood." The falsehood was, however, proved to be on the other side, and we should fancy the influence of the man of God must be on the decline in Balmaclellan parish. The days when the ministers ruled the roost like little God Almighty are nearly over even in Scotland.

Bishop McDonell, of Alexandria, Canada, has been preaching against dancing. He draws subtle distinctions. He will not say all dancing is sinful. David dancing before the ark was performing an act of worship, though to the scandal of his wife; but, says the bishop, the abominable round dances were sinful in themselves, and he warned all members of his church that in future those who took part in waltzes and other round dances would not be permitted to approach the Sacraments.

The Rev. Lucius C. Fry, the vicar of St. James's, Tottenham, who is in favor of Disestablishment, answers an attack on himself in the *Church Times* by saying he will gladly surrender his endowment of £106, and trust to a wealthy laity to make it up. We do not doubt that Mr. Fry is perfectly sincere, but he cannot expect his brethren, who have richer plums, to be as ready to relinquish their perquisites.

The following advertisement, which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, indicates that God and Mammon run in double harness better than in days of yore: "A Child of God, seeking employment, would like to take charge of property and collect rents; has a slight knowledge of architecture; can give unexceptionable references; age 31; married. Address F 116, at the printers." We should not wonder if this child of God is ready to take charge of property to any amount.

There are, it appears, a number of Voliaks in European Russia who are still pagans, though the population of Russia is usually reckoned as entirely Christian. A number of them are now being tried for having kidnapped an old man and sacrificed him to propitiate their gods, who, they believe, delight in sacrifices and blood. Evidently they are in a fair way to become good Christians.

A Pagan superstition evidently survives among the Christians of Roumania. At Bucharest the trial has taken place of two boys, aged six and fourteen respectively, who confessed to having deliberately drowned a child two years old. They declared that the long drought and total lack of rain had to be put a stop to by some means. This extraordinary defence is explained by an old custom of the country, according to which rain is attracted by magic. The children of the villages, in times of great drought, are made to throw a clay figure of a child into the water. The boys drowned the child merely because they had no clay figure. The elder was sentenced to two years' imprisonment; the younger was left to his mother's chastisement.

The Archbishop of York urges the formation of Church committees in every parish, however small. These are to be utilised for Church defence, and to boycott all in favor of Disestablishment. The *Daily News* remarks that the Archbishop has suddenly discovered that parishioners "have few opportunities of being brought into contact with each other as members of the Body of Christ." This did not matter, apparently, till the working classes got votes. It is now become "very urgent." Zeal for God always awakens up when Mammon is in danger.

Dr. A. K. H. Boyd gives some specimens from Scotch prayers in his last book. Here are a few quotations: "Bless each one of the 1,345 communicants who received the Sacraments last Sunday under this roof;" "Lord, have mercy upon the magistrates of Drumsleekie, such as they are;" "We thank thee that thou hast given us wumman to make us koamfortable;" "Lord, have mercy upon that miserable man who was lately pouring forth blasphemies against thee." The miserable man had only said there was no harm in walking in the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens on Sunday. The prayer about woman was uttered at a marriage service.

"Mog the Fireman" is the name of a well-known woman in Drury-lane, who in that district earned her name by running up fire-escapes. She can fight better than most men, and is often in trouble. Mog has some piety, for she told the policeman who arrested her "she feared no one but God." Mr. Lushington has remitted her to a quiet life for three months.

It is said that at the Chinese sacred city of Moukden, upon which the Japanese at first proposed to march, there is a large treasure locked up under the immediate care of the Fox-God. The city is the headquarters of the worship of that deity, and a temple in his honor is decorated with tablets on account of cures, before which the miracles of

Lourdes pale. Once on a time, it is said, a thief got to the treasure, but found he not only could not move any of it, but was himself rooted to the spot till relieved.

Mrs. Elliott, in her latest book of Roman Gossip, gives a sorry picture of the last Pope. He was a fatalist. He had never believed that he should lose his throne. A most devoted believer in the Virgin, whose glorification he proclaimed in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, he could never believe that the Mother of our Lord would permit his kingdom to be taken from him. After Victor Emanuel took Rome all faith and hope seemed dead.

By the way, the Papal silver coins have much depreciated in value, even as curiosities. On the continent they have long been refused, even in Roman Catholic churches, notwithstanding the fact that they bear an artistic representation of the Pope's head.

Some one sends us a religious journal, the *Australian Weekly*, which sneers as much as we do at Sydney Spiritualism and spooks, while cracking up the Jerusalem spooks as high as ever. The spooks "Cissy" and "Geordie" are flung aside without ceremony; but spook Jesus and spook holy ghost are treated as realities. This is unfair, and we protest. Let all spooks be treated alike and put on the same footing; and, if Christ be a reasonable spook, he won't object.—*Liberator*.

According to the *Two Worlds*, Mrs. Besant was not present at the spiritist *séance* at Sydney when Mr. Henry grabbed Cissy, the spirit, and caught Mrs. Mellon, the mejum. The *Two Worlds* gives Mrs. Mellon's version. The mejum says the materialising spirits "drew only from the lower part of my body, principally from my legs—in fact, at one time I felt as though I had no legs at all; they were rendered very small and shrunken, and that is how I explain my shoes and stockings coming off." Mrs. Mellon's shrunken legs may account for the lameness of her explanation of the exposure.

Of course it is understood that, when a mejum is caught, it is always because the spirit evaporates and condenses itself into the mejum. So intimate is the contact of spirit and mejum that, when the spirit has pulled a sitter's hair, lampblack, with which he had previously dressed it, was found on the hands of the medium, who calmly explained that whatever happened to the spirit's hands happened to her own.

This common explanation was tried even in the case of the famous mejum, Bastian, in his *séance* before the Archduke of Austria. When the spirit form emerged from the cabinet, the Archduke touched a spring, and an iron door immediately separated the spirit from the cabinet. Bastian was found on the one side, and some of his clothes in the cabinet on the other. The spirit had evaporated, and the mejum sought fresh fields and pastures new.

The materialisation of spirits has been demonstrated by an American inventor, who has discovered a method of solidifying whisky, gin, and rum in the form of sweetmeats.

In the *Nineteenth Century* Professor Max Müller explains "Why I am Not an Agnostic." He takes rather a curious position, for, while he admits that "all the objects of our knowledge are *ipso facto* phenomenal," he also thinks that "the human mind, in its highest functions, is not confined to a knowledge of phenomena only." He holds that there is both a power and a Logos behind phenomena. He says, cautiously: "I hardly venture to say whether I know all this, or whether I only believe it. I cannot help seeing order, law, reason, or Logos in the world; and I cannot account for it by merely *ex post* events, call them what you like—survival of the fittest, natural selection, or anything else." Accordingly, he goes on the old plan of interpreting nature in the terms of human intelligence. The question remains, Do not the facts of nature indicate that this is not the right method of interpretation?

Dr. A. K. H. Boyd, in his new book on St. Andrew's, tells of an Italian music master in Edinburgh. "One day he was passing the Tron Church as the service was drawing to a close. The beadle came to open the outer door, so that nothing might impede the rush of the congregation the moment the last amen was said (by the minister only). The lonely Italian drew near the door, and was startled. He said to the beadle, 'What is that horrible noise I hear?' The beadle, much scandalised, answered, 'That's the people praising God.' 'Do the people think their God likes to hear that horrible noise?' 'To be sure, of course he does.' The bad foreigner rejoined, 'Then their God must have no ear for music,' and, sorrowfully shaking his head, he walked away."

The *Glasgow Weekly Herald* calls attention to a sample of pious impiety in circulation in that city. It is in the style of a mercantile advertisement, and intimates the advantages of joining the "Eternal Insurance Company," whose "head office" is "Heaven," its directors the "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and which insures against everlasting fire. This is the kind of thing supposed to elevate the instincts of Sandy.

A curious publication is *A Common Prayer for the Church's Jubilee*, which reaches us from Manchester. The Church appears to be the one formerly known as Irvingite, judging from the following passage: "O Lord, incline thine ear and hear, open thine eyes and see, behold our desolation, look upon the Catholic Apostolic Church at this time, redeem it from the thralldom of the Pope. From the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, good Lord deliver us. From all those archbishops, bishops, and clergy who are enemies of religion, good Lord deliver us. Grant, O Lord Jesus, it may be a full deliverance, perfect and complete; grant thy people a real jubilee!"

After this petition against spiritual adversaries, it says of the Church: "May she realise, as no woman ever realised before, that holiness becometh thine house for ever." Then it prays for the rod of the stem of Jesus: "Make him of quick understanding." The rod is usually supposed to be J. C., and, if so, the request is remarkable.

Still stranger is the prayer which follows: "Avenge the blood of thy servant Solomon, pour down upon his successors such grace and power that his [or their] little fingers may be thicker than Solomon's loins, and whereas Solomon chastised with rods, his successors may chastise with scorpions, and root out priestcraft from the world." Can this refer to "King Solomon," who attempted polygamy at Brighton a little while ago?

The prayer asks: "Do thou be pleased to guide and hold our rulers continually, send us some Jeremiahs, some Ezekiels, and some Daniels, noble men, willing to let the Devil go." We wonder what Jehovah thinks of this remarkable prayer. We should fancy he would be willing to let the author go.

Despite previous discomfitures, or perhaps on account of them, the Duke of Argyll has another fling at Professor Huxley. This time it is for the article wherein Professor Huxley celebrated the advance of Science on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of *Nature*. Huxley does not believe in the double doctrine which, while surrendering this world to reason, claims another world for faith. The cocky Duke defends the divine oracles and teleology in a cloud of words, which only betray his own ignorance of the methods and conclusions of science.

The Pentecostal League has been holding holiness meetings in Exeter Hall this week. Praying for the outpouring of the spirit forms a chief feature. Cant and unction prevail, but they do not speak, like the apostles, with strange tongues. For this the outpouring of stronger spirit is necessary than any licensed to be retailed at Exeter Hall.

We are a Christian people, and the Rev. B. Waugh assures us that, since the founding of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, no fewer than 7,000 British fathers and mothers have been convicted of cruelty to their own children. Christianity has only had nineteen hundred years' run yet. In time it may perhaps do as much for us as nature has done for the lower animals.

The *World* (Dec. 12) devotes an article, entitled "Mountebank Mystics," to the exposure of the Theosophists. It points out that the patrons of this "dismal imposture" are chiefly drawn from persons of wealth and social distinction, and says: "It seems to be considered that credulity, like vice, in the estimation of Edmund Burke, loses half its evil by losing all its grossness." The *World* doubts whether, after all, we are so very much better and wiser than our ghost-fearing and witch-hunting forefathers.

In the *Westminster Gazette* (December 11) Miss Esther Milworthy gives an amusing account of Madame Blavatsky, and relates how she saw her confederate, Baboula, hide Koot-hoomi letters where they could be revealed. Madame used to take apricots and cream in public, but bacon and eggs went up the back stair. She had attained such Theosophic heights as to be beyond adherence to vegetarian diet in private.

Bramwell Booth has been starring it on the stage among the variety artists at the St. James's Theatre of Varieties, Plymouth. At first he had a very mixed reception; but when he promised he would not give a religious discourse, and adopted the secular lay of raising the submerged tenth,

he was listened to with attention. Unconsciously, Booth has at last found out his real element. He is a public entertainer.

In accordance with the wish of Cardinal Vaughan, prayers are offered for the conversion of England in all the Spanish churches. Meanwhile Archbishop Plunket congratulates himself on the progress made by the Protestant movement in Spain, under the new Protestant bishop of Madrid.

The Rev. C. N. Gray, acting, as he thinks, with the authority of the Archbishop of York, has refused to issue licences for the re-marriage of divorced persons within the York diocese. The Chancellor of the diocese, Earl Grimthorpe, has accordingly dismissed him from his office for failing to comply with the law, and a long and acrimonious controversy between them has been published in the *Guardian*.

The number of persons officially reported as killed in the recent earthquakes in Southern Italy is stated to be eighty-six. Besides these about six hundred were injured. Earthquakes make the loving care of our heavenly Father somewhat conspicuous by its absence.

In West Prussia they have a plague of mice and crows, between which the roots and corn are devastated. This is, however, arranged for the greatest happiness of the greatest number—the mice and crows being in a majority, thanks to the abundance of their rations.

It is curious to note good Christians rubbing their hands over the disasters in China. At the Exeter Hall meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Dr. Smith said God would use them for the triumph of Christianity. Christianity has triumphed through bloodshed and the extermination of opponents.

The *War Cry* is not so sensational as it used to be when Mr. Foote read some extracts from it during his trial for "blasphemy" in 1883. But the bills of its local "corps" are still "thrilling." One of these documents is issued by the Cambridge Heath Citadel, Mare-street, Hackney. It announces a "War between Heaven and Hell" from December the third to December the seventh. Some notorious rebels of the "Damnation Army" are to relate their adventures. A notorious ex-burglar is also to tell his story. There is to be "thrilling and touching testimony" by "the strayed husband," who was "married twice to one woman"—which is a very temperate case of bigamy. "Dark Deeds" are to be narrated by "a black man," and the program includes a turn by "a desperate drunkard." And this is religion! And in this stuff there are people who see the means of saving the human race! What an ironical dialogue upon it might come from the pen of Plato, if he were to revisit the glimpses of the moon, after an absence of more than two thousand years.

Samuel Lover, in a crowded room with a friend, asked him, amid the din, if he had seen his new song, naming the title of it. "O, yes, to be sure," replied the other, thinking he had caught the name, "the 'Angel Swiss Boy,' and a capital song too, my dear fellow; you never did anything better." Lover was disgusted. He repeated the title in a louder tone, but with no better effect, eliciting the reply, "Yes, yes, of course, 'The Ancient Sister!' Isn't that what I said? Everybody's talking about it, and no wonder." "'Ancient Sister' be —?" exclaimed Lover, thoroughly exasperated, "'Ancient Sister,' indeed?" And, putting his mouth close to his friend's ear, he shouted, "The Angel's Whisper!" "Eh! eh!" said the other, hurrying away to hide his confusion, "that's more like the Devil's Yell."

There is no literary crime greater than that of exciting a social, and especially a theological, odium against ideas that are purely scientific, none against which the disapproval of every educated man ought to be more strongly expressed. The republic of letters owes it to its own dignity to tolerate no longer offences of that kind.—*Professor J. W. Draper, "History of the Intellectual Development of Europe," vol. ii., p. 387.*

TWO OF A KIND.

If join a church you feel you must,
Don't hesitate a minute,
But, Catholic or Protestant—
Whichever's first—get in it;
The difference between the two
Won't pay a moment's bother—
It's incense you will find in one,
And nonsense in the other.

—G. E. Macdonald.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 9, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. :—11.15, "Capital Punishment: Should it be Abolished?" 7, "Who was the Father of Jesus?"

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 16, Plymouth; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.—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.

MR. FOOTE'S FIGHTING FUND.—A. G., £6; F. E. P., £5; D. H. L., £4; N. B., £5.

W. M. KNOX.—Is inserted, all except the references to the anti-Infidel blackguard, whom we decline to advertise. You say yourself "it is necessary to draw the line somewhere."

E. G. TAYLOR and W. BAILEY.—Glad to receive your glowing accounts of Mr. Watts's Sunday evening lecture at Manchester. He wears extremely well, and more than retains his enthusiasm at an age when most men begin to lose it. We regard him as a very valuable colleague.

J. ASHWORTH.—Jenner, of vaccination celebrity, was long anterior to Sir W. Jenner, who died a few years ago.

J. FISII.—Lecture notices must be sent in on the model of our printed list. We cannot undertake to pick them out, and re-write them, from letters. See paragraph.

W. H. MORRISH.—A good article, but we cannot reprint it. You are mistaken about our references to the prosecution of Messrs. Ward, Wilson, and King in connection with the Leeds Sunday Lecture Society. Our references to it have been numerous, and we offered our advice and assistance. We confess, however, that we are not very enthusiastic. The Sunday Society wants an alteration in the law to cover its own operations. It is not at all anxious for a sweeping change, so as to give freedom to all sections—including Secularists.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—Mrs. B. E. Marks, 10s.; S. A., 10s.; W. H. S., 5s.; collected at Mr. Foote's Camberwell lecture, £1 5s. 6d.

V. VERNON.—You sent to Mr. Forder. The matter is in his hands.

MR. WATTS'S ELECTION FUND DEFICIT.—We have received: G. W. Foote, £1 1s.; W. Bailey, 10s.; Admirer, 5s.

J. SEDDON.—The Manchester Branch's new circular should attract adherents. Mr. Foote will offer you an early date as soon as he hears from another South Lancashire Branch.

W. R.—Mr. Holyoake's address is, Eastern Lodge, Brighton. All such addresses will be found in the *Secular Almanack*, which Freethinkers should keep by them.

ANXIOUS.—The libel case should come on for hearing soon after Christmas.

W. BRADBURN.—Thanks for your enclosures and good wishes. Mr. Foote is well at present.

F. W. LANGRIDGE.—May fill a corner. Pleased to hear that you regard the *Freethinker* as your "weekly tonic."

H. A. CUMBER.—Thanks. See paragraph.

E. H.—(1) Glad to hear you were delighted with last week's cartoon. We have others in preparation. (2) Freethinkers can withdraw their children from religious instruction in public schools, but the little ones are thus frequently subjected to insult and ill-usage. For this reason the Conscience Clause is a farce. (3) Finsbury electors had six votes each (not nine) at the School Board election. Mr. Watts's votes were not all plumpers.

ROBIN DURHAM.—We have repeatedly declared that, in our judgment, the Freethought party should take independent action in School Board elections; particularly when the religious question is uppermost.

N. J. NEWETT.—If you refer to the *Freethinker* for November 11 (p. 722), you will see an announcement that the N.S.S. Executive had been obliged to suspend the Society's affiliation to the Hall of Science Club. This was done after mature deliberation. The Club Committee, presuming on the technical advantage of its holding the keys of the premises, has chosen to defy the Board of Directors and the N.S.S. Executive, with regard to the letting of the large hall to outsiders. When it was let for a purpose which the Board and the Executive viewed with disapprobation, and even with a stronger feeling; and when the Club Committee persisted in this ill-advised policy, the Executive had no alternative but to clear itself from all moral responsibility. This it did by suspending the Society's affiliation to the Club until a guarantee was obtained against the recurrence of such unpleasantness. It is to be regretted that members of the N.S.S., who visit the Hall, cannot at present avail themselves of the Club privileges; but the honor of the Secular movement is above the temporary convenience of individuals. Our temperate announcement of November 11 appearing to be inadequate, we may have to make a full and final statement in next week's *Freethinker*. We desired to avoid this, but a few obstinate persons seem bent on forcing us into it.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser—Echo—Isle of Man Times—Freidonker—De Dageraad—Newcastle Evening News—Owl—Liberty—Reynolds's Newspaper—Lucifer—Truthseeker—Open Court—Liberator—Secular Thought—Two Worlds—Freedom—Progressive Thinker—Burnley Co-operative Record—Homœopathic Review—Twentieth Century.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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.

MR. FOOTE'S audience at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening was a good one, but the foggy weather prevented it from being quite as large as he has had on recent occasions. It was, however, very responsive and enthusiastic. This evening (Dec. 16), which is the last time Mr. Foote will be at the Hall of Science until the new year, he will deliver a seasonable lecture on "Who was the Father of Jesus?" This is the question which was put to the children in a certain London Board school, and the answer to which induced the Rev. J. Coxhead to start all the rumpus over religious education. Mr. Coxhead ought to hear Mr. Foote's answer. Other Christians, at any rate, may be got to listen, if our Secular friends will only give publicity to this lecture amongst their more orthodox friends and acquaintances.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts had three good audiences in Manchester. In the evening the hall was crowded. Friends were present from Oldham, Failsworth, Stockport, and Hyde. Four gentlemen travelled forty miles to hear Mr. Watts. Debate followed each lecture, and the whole of the meetings were most enthusiastic.

To-day, Sunday (Dec. 16), Mr. Watts visits Plymouth for the first time since his return from America. He gives three lectures, and we hope to hear that he has had large audiences.

London Freethinkers are again reminded that the Secular Federation's annual dinner takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday evening, January 7. Mr. G. W. Foote will preside as usual, and the tickets are four shillings each. These are now obtainable at 28 Stonecutter-street, at the Hall of Science, and from any London Branch secretary.

The *Life of Charles Bradlaugh* has been reviewed in some of the newspapers. We therefore conclude it is published. But as the publishers have not sent a copy to the leading Freethought paper in England, we are unable to give our readers an account of the book—at least, for the present. The biographical portion is written by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, and the critical portion by Mr. J. M. Robertson. The two volumes are priced at one guinea.

The London *Evening News*, in noticing the just-published biography, says: "Charles Bradlaugh must ever stand out as a gigantic figure in the history of the century." From a Conservative paper that did its worst to oppose his just claims, this indicates how the whirligig of time brings its revenges.

The *Secular Almanack for 1895* is now on sale at Mr. Forder's, and we strongly commend it to the attention of Freethinkers, who, after reading it themselves, might lend it to their Christian friends. The new issue of this publication is novel in shape, size, and character. Our artist has produced a handsome design for the cover, which is printed in colored ink, and presents a striking appearance. The contents include articles by Messrs. Foote, Wheeler, and Watts, and a long and interesting account of the "Female Infidel" referred to in the *Memoirs of De Quincey*. The lady was handsome, gifted, and wealthy; and her abduction by two adventurers was the talk of London. Her avowal of unbelief in Christianity arrested the course of justice, and she became a helpless victim of a most infamous

bigotry. Her misfortunes are related minutely by Mr. Wheeler, who has taken great pains to collect all the facts from contemporary records. The Almanack also includes a short fiction, and other interesting items, besides the usual mass of information for Freethinkers. We have only to add that the entire profit of this publication will accrue to the National Secular Society. Mr. Forder will send copies post free for sevenpence.

This paragraph is like a lady's postscript. We have omitted to mention a very racy item in the Almanack. It is a satire on Inspiration by no less a person than the great Jeremy Bentham, who was really an Atheist, like his friend and disciple, James Mill. In his younger days, when his style was nimble and pungent, Bentham translated Voltaire's *White Bull (Taureau Blanc)*, although it was published anonymously. His preface was as long as the translation, and is capital reading. So scarce is this volume that a copy of it does not even exist in the British Museum. Nor is it likely to be reprinted. The readers of the Almanack, therefore, are in possession of a great rarity. They have not the whole of Bentham's preface, but the portion which will most interest them—namely, his ridicule of Inspiration. This piece alone is worth the whole price of the Almanack.

Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture on *The Holy Bible* is now on sale at our publishing office. He is delivering it to crowded audiences in the United States. One part of it is extremely interesting—namely, his criticism on Jesus Christ. Colonel Ingersoll has never spoken out clearly and decisively on this point before. He derides the claim of the Prophet of Nazareth to be "the ideal" of humanity.

The *Ironclad Age* says Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on the Holy Bible is the greatest production of the day and of that orator.

Lika Joko, Mr. Harry Furniss's new paper, is indulging in what would be called "profanity" in the *Freethinker*. One of its last week's illustrations was entitled "True Consolation." It represented a poor widow talking to a young lady visitor, who asks her whether the deceased was "prepared." "If he wasn't," the widow says, "it was his own fault. I did my dooty by him. Didn't I read the Burial Service to him every day for the last six months?"

Beneath this is an article on "Halomania," which is really "shocking." Oh, Mr. Furniss, how could you? Fancy a firm called Kant, Peck, and Sniff selling *halos*! And fancy Mr. Bonnerges Blower, the open-air preacher in Hyde Park, sending a testimonial from Wormwood Scrubbs!

The Rev. L. de Beaufoy Klein, D.Sc., who occupied the post of Professor of Biology at Dublin, has left the Roman Catholic Church in the direction of Rationalism. He preached last Sunday in the Unitarian Church, Effra-road, Brixton.

Elias Lane, ex-Mayor of Christchurch, writes to the local *Times* suggesting that, as the ordinary method of swearing is dirty and dangerous, the best mode of introducing the improved mode and making it widely known would be to take the evidence of the police on affirmation instead of on oath. When will our magistrates be sensible enough to follow this suggestion?

In the last number of the *Liberator* to hand (Nov. 3) Mr. Symes holds out hopes that its publication may be continued. It would be a great pity if it should be allowed to drop after its many years of usefulness. No doubt it taxes Mr. Symes's energies, but he delights in work.

De Dageraad continues the useful articles by Dr. Teerling on "The Chief Points of Free and Scientific Thought," and the translation of Messrs. Foote and Wheeler's *Crimes of Christianity*.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie sends a well-timed letter to the *Echo*, pointing out that it is futile to condemn capital punishment merely because antagonistic to the precepts of Christ, since some of our most useful institutions are in opposition to these same precepts, such as savings banks, hospitals, and prisons. It is well for our letter-writing friends to take advantage of the targets continually offering themselves in the public press.

The *Newcastle Evening News*, in giving a report of Mr. Watts's recent lecture in that town, upon "The French Revolution," says: "The lecture was immensely enjoyed, as testified by the numerous outbursts of applause. It was, moreover, given with a coherent marshalling of facts, a force, precision, and fluency that gained universal admiration from beginning to end."

Mr. Charles Watts's election committee has met together to clear up matters of business after the poll. The accounts,

being thoroughly overhauled, show an income of £103 1s. 2d., and an expenditure of £117 10s. 1d. There is thus a deficit of £14 8s. 11d., which we have no doubt will be made up. Mr. Watts made a gallant fight, and bore his own out-of-pocket expenses. It would be highly unjust, therefore, to saddle him, or any other person, with the aforesaid deficit. We ask the friends of Secular Education to clear up this account at once: and as example is better than precept, we herewith subscribe our own guinea. And now for the next.

The next Children's Entertainment, under the auspices of the "Hall of Science Club," will be given on Thursday, December 20. The program will consist of vocal and instrumental music, ventriloquism, children's play, and dancing. The admission will be free to children of members under thirteen (by ticket); other children will be charged a penny. Galleries free to members, who can also introduce a friend on payment of twopence. Tickets can be obtained of Mr. J. Anderson at the club any evening.

The annual Children's Party at the London Hall of Science is fixed for January 30. Mr. Robert Forder is treasurer of the fund, and he invites contributions of money, toys, books, or eatables, for this great occasion, when hundreds of little ones will be made as happy as possible. Those who can give personal assistance in the entertainment, or serve on the committee, are desired to communicate with Miss Vance.

The Hall of Science (London) bookstall is managed for the Executive by Mr. George Ward. At the last Executive meeting Mr. Ward reported a profit of £8 during the past quarter, the whole of which is paid into the Society's exchequer.

Mr. Charles Watts has a consignment of Mr. S. P. Putnam's *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*, which was recently noticed in our columns. It is a book of nearly a thousand pages, and contains 141 portraits, some of which are of great excellence. The price is one guinea, carriage paid to any part of Great Britain or Ireland. Orders should be sent direct (with remittance) to Mr. Watts, 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

The Wood Green Branch held its first social gathering on Sunday. A good party sat down to tea, and everything went off successfully. Thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Guest, Mr. Thompson, and others who contributed to the comfort and entertainment of the company.

Freethought lectures are being kept up at Chester—a city with an old wall, an old church, and old-fashioned people. Mr. Ernest Newman, of the Liverpool Branch, lectured there on December 2; and Mr. Lawrence Small, of the same Branch, lectures there to-day (December 16) on "The Origin of Life."

Miss Amye Reade, a cousin of the late Winwood Reade, lectured last Sunday in the Hall of Science, Sheffield. In stating her reasons for stepping upon the Freethought platform, she said that some years ago she sought the advice of Charles Bradlaugh on a certain matter. Struck by his kindness and ability, she ventured to speak about theology. His words set her thinking, and reason eventually compelled her to abandon Christianity. In doing so she had become an outcast from home and society. Our Sheffield friends report Miss Reade to be a lady of culture and some power of speech.

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION.—At the end of the sixteenth century the simple proposition, that men for holding or declaring heterodox opinions in religion should not be burned alive or otherwise put to death, was itself little else than a sort of heterodoxy; and, though many privately must have been persuaded of its truth, the Protestant churches were as far from acknowledging it as that of Rome.—*Henry Hallam, F.R.A.S., "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," vol. i., p. 559; 1854.*

PROTESTANTISM AND PERSECUTION.—The Protestant religion is, for the most part, more tolerant than the Catholic, simply because the events which have given rise to Protestantism have at the same time increased the play of the intellect, and therefore lessened the power of the clergy. But whoever has read the works of the great Calvinist divines, and, above all, whoever has studied their history, must know that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the desire of persecuting their opponents burnt as hotly among them as it did among any of the Catholics even in the worst days of the papal dominion.—*Henry Thomas Buckle, "History of Civilisation in England," chap. viii., vol. i., p. 684; 1858.*

ANOTHER PAINE LIE.

THE Rev. B. Arberth-Evans is the "Pastor" of Garden Walk Baptist Chapel, Ashton, Preston, and circulates a magazine called *Our own Illustrated Monthly*. This gentleman, like Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, is evidently a Welshman, and has as much knowledge of things in general, if we are to judge of an article in the November number on Thomas Paine, as his rev. countryman had of the "Atheist Shoemaker" in particular. I have seen many lying statements regarding Paine, but this is one of the most malignant that was ever penned. It professes to be taken from the *Presbyterian*, 1850, and the Christian charity of its mendacious author may be gauged from its opening lines: "Though some of the apostles of Deism have been sober and upright, and, in consequence of their intellectual pursuits, literary ambition, and other causes, have been free from the indulgence of open vices, yet it must be acknowledged that the greater part have been grossly immoral."

No doubt this scribbler had in his mind such vicious Deists as David Hume, Edward Gibbon, Volney, Voltaire, &c., &c.; and if these were so wicked with a Deity, what must have been the lives of their Atheist compeers, "who had not a God to thank for this grace" as B. V. says of himself when describing the thanksgiving for the recovery of the Prince of Wales. Suppose we turn the tables on Mr. Arberth-Evans, and give him a *quid pro quo*. Let us begin by saying that, although there are probably a few Baptist ministers sober and upright in consequence of their literary ambition, yet it must be acknowledged from the reports in the Police and Divorce Courts that the greater part have been shockingly wicked.

The story purports to begin in 18—, and the author is the venerable Dr. S—, who was Paine's physician in 1805. Now, in no life of Paine that I have consulted is there any mention of such a medical man in attendance on him. But when it is also stated that this doctor was "an elder in the Presbyterian Church," we need ask no more questions about his identity; it is a confirmation of my statement above that ministers are "grossly immoral." We, who know how comfortably off Paine was during the last years of his life; that he left considerable landed and other property to his friends; that such a distinguished man as Thomas Addis Emmet, brother of the stainless Irish patriot-martyr, Robert Emmet, was one of his executors, can rightly judge the following wretched farrago of lies and malice: "The exterior of the house when I approached it presented evidence of utter neglect and decay, and the interior corresponded with it. Two or three broken chairs, an old pine table, a small stand covered with a newspaper filled with spots of tallow, constituted almost all the furniture."

Fortunately, we can trace Paine's dwelling-place from 1802 to June 8, 1809, when he died; and there is not a shadow of justification for the above. Possibly the Rev. Arberth-Evans has not read a Life of Paine or any of his writings, and probably never will, or we would ask him to get, from a Free or any other library, the latest and best, by Mr. Moncreux Conway. The liar (one cannot in cold blood call him anything else) then says that in a small, dark room, there laid Paine, "the most disgustingly filthy object" that he ever beheld. Then, for the first time, an old negress (Betty) is brought on the scene as Paine's servant, who "was, like her master, fond of drink." Paine was in the habit of charging her with stealing his rum, and she would retort by calling him an old drunkard. It is needless to say that story, woman and all, is pure malicious invention; and if this is a fair specimen of the history doled out monthly by this "pastor," his sheep at Ashton get very poor food.

One thing about this story, distinct from the many lies told of Paine, is that there is no pretence of his conversion in it. Has that been omitted since Mr. Bradlaugh exposed the story in 1861, or Mr. Foote (in his *Infidel Death-Beds*) in 1888? However, it is a good, strong, ironclad lie, and—expose it as much as possible—will do duty again in the future by "grossly immoral" parsons—we beg pardon, persons.

ROBERT FORDER.

How to Help Us.

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

THE ASS IN RELIGION.

If it be true, as Jesus and Paul taught (see Matthew xi. 25; 1 Corinthians i. 26, 27), that a man's piety is in inverse proportion to his wisdom, it is not surprising that among the animals the most stupid should be very religious. The ass was much honored among the Jews. Balaam's ass saw the angel of the Lord before the prophet did, and the lion spared the ass when he slew the man of God who came out of Judah (1 Kings xiii. 28).

Tacitus states that when the Israelites were perishing from thirst in the desert "a herd of wild asses came from feeding, and went to a rock overshadowed by a grove of trees"; Moses followed, "conjecturing that there was some grassy soil, and so he opened large sources of water for them" (*Hist.*, bk. v., ch. iii.). The historian adds that the Jews placed an image of the ass in the temple to celebrate this deliverance; and Josephus is very angry with Apion, who asserted that Antiochus found an ass's head "made of gold and worth a great deal of money in the holy place" (*C. Ap.*, ii. 6).

The Jews believed that Messiah should come sitting on an ass (Zech. ix. 9), and, accordingly, this was the "mode of motion" adopted by Jesus when he entered Jerusalem. Of course, this led the early Christians to honor and, as the heathens alleged, to worship the ass. Messiah's ass, said the Rabbins, was to descend from that of Abraham, as Christ himself from the patriarch (Farrar's *Life of Christ*, p. 532, n. 5).

"Perhaps," says Professor Robertson, "the charge mentioned by Minucius Felix and by Tertullian, of worshipping the head of an ass, was as old as the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138), to which antiquaries seem disposed to refer a rude drawing of a man worshipping a crucified human figure with an ass's head, found in the palace of the Cæsars in 1856, bearing the inscription, 'Alexamenus worships God'" (*History of Christian Church*, ch. ii., p. 10, n. 2). This calumny is noticed by several of the Fathers, who complain that the Pagans called the Christians *asinarii cultores*—i.e., worshippers of the ass, or asinine (stupid) worshippers. The double meaning was no doubt intentional.

In the Middle Ages piety was not only found in the worshippers, but in the asses themselves. In the *Historia Societatis Jesu* we have the following story: "A priest, who was carrying the host to a sick man, had to pass through a drove of asses. To his utter astonishment, the beasts not only made way for him, but devoutly fell upon their knees as he passed. They then formed into line, followed him in procession, and waited at the door until he had performed his ministrations. Nor did they return to their pasture till they had received his benediction."

Pious asses were careful, like the London School Board (Moderate and Progressive), to impart religious knowledge to their young. It is related of a mule of Rimini, who no doubt had a "believing mother," that, "rejecting the fodder which her master gave her after a rigorous fast of many days, she prostrated herself before the host which St. Anthony was carrying to confound a heretic who denied the real presence." This mule, like Balaam's ass, saw with the eye of faith what profane human vision could not perceive.

"The Feast of the Ass," together with "The Feast of Fools," and other buffooneries, was once an institution of the Church. (Have such festivals entirely ceased?) An Archbishop of Sens, who died in 1222, composed a Missal for the service of this Feast, which was held at Beauvais, on the 14th of January, to commemorate the flight of the Virgin and child into Egypt. The most beautiful girl in the city represented the Virgin, and was placed on an ass richly caparisoned. Thus mounted, she preceded the bishop and clergy to the Church of St. Stephen. On entering the chancel they ranged themselves on the right side of the altar, and the mass commenced. Instead of the usual responses, *Amens*, &c., each part of the service was terminated by the burden of *Hee-Haw, Hee-Haw*, in imitation of the braying of an ass, and the officiating priest, instead of the benediction, concluded by singing three times "*Hee-Haw, Hee-Haw, Hee-Haw*." Surely an impressive and suitable ending to a solemn service.

The anthem sung on this festival has been preserved. Two canons were deputed to fetch the ass to the altar. The animal, clad with precious priestly ornaments, was solemnly conducted to the middle of the choir, and this hymn in its praise was sung in a major key:—

From the country of the East
Came this strong and handsome beast;
This able ass beyond compare,
Heavy loads and packs to bear,
Huzza, Seignor Ass, Huzza!

Amen! bray, most honored ass,
Sated now with grain and grass!
Amen repeat, Amen reply,
And disregard antiquity.
Huzza, Seignor Ass, Huzza!

Another Feast of the Ass was anciently celebrated on

Christmas Day in honor of Balaam's ass. Balaam, with an immense pair of spurs, rode on a wooden ass which enclosed a speaker. Palm Sunday was another time at which the ass was prominent. Hone (*Ancient Mysteries*) quotes an old English book, which says: "Upon Palme Sundaye they play the foles sadely, drawinge after them an asse in a rope, when they be not moch distant from the woden asse that they drawe."

Religion, I fear, has lost its hold on the animals; this, perhaps, is a sign of the general apostasy which shall precede the coming of Christ. Fishes and birds no longer listen attentively to sermons, as they did in the days of St. Anthony and St. Francis. I have not read of any pious *quadruped* asses in the present unbelieving age; but the biped species still exists. In Popish and Ritualistic Churches males and females may still be seen prostrated before a morsel of paste, like the asses and mule in the above stories. While Christianity remains, *asinarii cultores* "shall not cease."
JAMES A. RICHARDSON.

ROME, FREEMASONRY, AND FREETHOUGHT.

ENGLISH Freemasonry, presided over by the heir to the throne, is so eminently respectable, religious, and even Conservative in its tendencies, that it is always a wonder to English Freemasons why the Pope should manifest opposition to their order. A favorite explanation is that Catholic priests resent being unable to learn the secrets of Masonry in the confessional. In its solemn absurdity this is worthy of the initiates of the mystic tie, and few indeed of English Masons ever get beyond the initial step. Do they really suppose that since their ancient rite began, which, I take it, was about the year 1717, there never has been a single person who has divulged the mysteries of the craft, no Jesuit who has ever become a Freemason in the hope of serving his own order by what he learns in the lodge, where Jachin may meet Boaz and test if he knows the shibboleth of Tubal-Cain, Mahabone, or Macbenach, or the higher mysteries of Yahbulon? Do they fancy the head of Christendom seeks to remove their aprons, or wishes to interfere with the ritualistic tomfoolery wherewith they serve their highly respectable, convivial, business, and philanthropic ends? Common sense declares that, if the ends of English Freemasons were the real ends of Freemasonry, the conclave of cardinals would as soon think of holding a consistory to break a butterfly on the wheel as to launch the once-dreaded thunderbolts of the Vatican at so harmless an order. But the truth is, English Freemasonry is only the gold or tinsel fringe of real masonry. In the foreign lodges Freemasonry is a school of Freethought. The Mason learns that the sacred things of religions are only symbols, and that there is no light, no truth, which is not open to the aspirant without the necessity of priestly guidance. Freemasons of the higher grades have the keys to the symbology and secrets of the Romish Church, and this, in itself, is a reason for that Church's relentless opposition. Freemasonry, though, in its English and exoteric aspect, hopelessly behind the age by its secrecy and its exclusion of women, nevertheless holds certain fundamental ideals incompatible with the exclusive claims of the Christian Church. It professes to be wider than any claims of sect or creed; to be as open to the Moslem, the Jew, the Hindu, or the Freethinker as to the Christian. It forms, as it were, a wider church on which all can meet on a common, fraternal footing. Since 1877 the Grand Orient of France has recognised that the expression, "Great Architect of the Universe," is but a symbolic expression of the reality that is beyond all symbols; and Atheists, who cannot use such an anthropomorphic phrase, may, nevertheless, be better Freemasons than the Prince of Wales.

Be sure the Pope knows perfectly well what he is about in denouncing Freemasonry; and, from the Catholic point of view, he is quite justified in so doing. Whence comes it, then, that his denunciations appear absurd when applied to English Freemasonry? The truth is that Freemasonry in Britain has drifted into altogether different currents from its course on the continent. In the last century, while on the continent the order was taken advantage of by philosophers, republicans, and those working for liberty, equality, and fraternity, in England and Scotland adventurers, like the Chevalier Ramsey, sought to utilise it in favor of the Stuart Pretenders. There it tended to become Jacobin, here Jacobite. Under changed circumstances the spirit of freedom has survived on the continent, as here the spirit of royalty and respectability.

In France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and America the lodges serve as meeting places for all who are working for the interests of humanity apart from the churches and priests. In England the order is entered chiefly by those desirous of extending their business connections and widening the circle of well-to-do friends. Comparisons are

odious. It would be an insult to the order to discuss which current best represents its acknowledged principles. The truth is, English Freemasons are but initiates. The reason lies, of course, in the past history of the order. In the reaction after the French Revolution the Grand Lodge of England, to prevent outgrowths of their order in a Jacobin direction—for Jacobitism was nearly extinct—proclaimed that there were only three degrees in Freemasonry. They might as well have proclaimed that there are only three degrees in a circle. As a consequence, English Master Masons fancy they have reached the top of the ladder; while, in truth, no Freemason who has not reached thirty degrees has the angle of vision to fully perceive the real inwardness of his craft. Yet every Master Mason ought to have an inkling that the only religion of true Freemasonry is the religion of humanity; its true worship, work for the emancipation of the oppressed, the enlightenment of the ignorant, and the redemption of suffering humanity.

SAT BIAL.

HOLY BELFAST!

THE good people of this thrice-blessed city are so extremely good—on the outside—and so priggish about it, that one often regrets the non-existence of those very suitable regions hereafter, where they would find their level. Heresy, you see, has its drawbacks. The Belfast people take much pride unto themselves on account of their high commercial standing. This standing has lately been battered about somewhat. Plainly speaking, it is nothing whatever but the most sordid money-grabbing instinct, and it has had some very ugly developments recently. Men in high commercial credit, good Unionists also in politics, who have sneered at the South and West of Ireland people for dishonesty in shirking grievous rent burdens, have themselves been playing fast and loose with other people's money. Companies have been going into liquidation literally by the dozen, and declaring dividends ranging from three or four shillings in the pound up.

The worst feature of these cases is that in many of these companies the creditors include large numbers of poor people, widows, and trustees for orphans. The hardships in these instances fall entirely on the undeserving, and the culpable directors, owing to the present state of the law, escape entirely. They do not even lose caste, and their church membership continues with complete success. I have even heard of an elder, in a fashionable Presbyterian church, paying his creditors sixpence in the pound, and never thinking of resigning his church office. Verily, the abolition of hell is a great mistake.
W. M. KNOX.

The Consolation of Religion.

In this age of fact and demonstration it is refreshing to find a man who believes thoroughly in the monstrous and miraculous, the impossible and immoral; who still clings lovingly to the legends of the bib and rattle; who through the bitter experiences of a wicked world has kept the credulity of the cradle, and finds comfort and joy in thinking about the Garden of Eden, the subtle serpent, the flood, and Babel's tower stopped by the jargon of a thousand tongues; who reads with happy eyes the story of the burning brimstone storm that fell upon the cities of the plain, and smilingly explains the transformation of the retrospective Mrs. Lot; who laughs at Egypt's plagues and Pharaoh's whelmed and drowning hosts; who eats manna with the wandering Jews, warms himself at the burning bush, sees Korah's company by the hungry earth devoured, claps his wrinkled hands with glee above the heathen's butchered babes, and longingly looks back to the patriarchal days of concubines and slaves. How touching, when the learned and wise crawl back in cribs and ask to hear the rhymes and fables once again! How charming in these hard and scientific times, to see old age in Superstition's lap, with eager lips upon her withered breast!—*Ingersoll*.

Obituary.

WITH deep regret I record the death of Mrs. Ellen Cresswell, who died at Newcastle on December 6, aged forty-nine years, and was interred at Jesmond Cemetery on December 9. The deceased and her husband, Mr. John Cresswell, have been for over fifteen years members of the Newcastle Branch. The coffin was followed by a large number of friends to the grave, where Mr. C. Cohen read the Secular Burial Service in an impressive manner. Mr. Cresswell and his family have the deepest sympathy of all our members and friends in their sad loss.—J. G. BARTRAM.

BOOK CHAT.

ONE of the characters in Hall Caine's new book, *The Manxman*, is a schoolmaster, who always "taught the Church Catechism and swore at his boys in Manx." "Peter Quilliam," he cried one day, "who brought you out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage?" "Deed, master," said Pete, "I never was in no such places, for I never had the money nor the clothes for it; and that's how stories are getting abroad."

English students of psychology will be glad to have the *Lectures on Human and Animal Psychology*, by Wilhelm Wundt, a translation of which standard work has been made by Messrs. Creighton and Titchener. It is published by Macmillan.

Mr. Reeves, 185 Fleet-street, issues, as No. 22 of his shilling Bellamy Library, *Cruelties of Civilisation*, a number of essays published by the Humanitarian League, and edited by its secretary, Mr. Henry S. Salt. The papers comprise: "Humanitarianism: Its General Principles and Progress," by H. S. Salt; "I Was in Prison: A Plea for the Amelioration of the Criminal Law," by Robert Johnson; "A Plea for Mercy to Offenders," by C. J. Hopwood, Q.C., M.P., the Recorder of Liverpool; "Women's Wages, and the Conditions under which they are Earned," by Miss I. O. Ford; "Dangerous Trades for Women," by Mrs. C. Mallet; and "The Humanising of the Poor Law," by J. F. Oakesholt. All exhibit some deplorable features of our boasted civilisation, and seek to remedy them in a spirit of rational science and humanity. The Humanitarian League is doing a valuable work, and the present publication, shows its attention is by no means confined to the so-called "lower animals."

Messrs. Macmillan & Co. announce *Law in a Free Country*, by Wordsworth Donisthorpe, and a bright, suggestive book is expected.

Merrie England (London: 4 Bouverie-street) is an extraordinary pennyworth. The author, Mr. Robert Blatchford, "Nunquam" of the *Clarion*, states the case for Socialism with point and power, and we do not wonder that its sale has reached half a million copies.

Mr. G. F. Black, assistant keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, has in preparation a work dealing with "Scottish Charms and Amulets," and the superstitions connected therewith.

The learned writer whose initials are J. M. C. again writes in the *Scottish Guardian* (December 7) on the Epistle ascribed to St. Clement of Rome. He gives a long extract showing the way in which the Epistle is used in the writings ascribed to Clement of Alexandria, if he used it at all, and says: "From the foregoing it appears that Clement of Alexandria, if the copyist, omits everything that has a liturgical ring about it; everything that expressly makes for the object with which the Epistle was written; everything that he had previously taken from the Epistle, or was going to take; everything that any other writer had taken from the Epistle, or was going to take. What he does in the passage quoted above he does throughout pp. 609-618. He winds his way through the Epistle in and out its chapters, moving amongst the various pitfalls (Origen, *Apost. Const.*, Cyril, Ambrose, Jerome, *Syriac Excerpts*, etc.) with as much certainty as if he had Bishop Lightfoot's edition of the Epistle in his hands. He was, nevertheless, blind as to the future use to be made of the document. The natural explanation of this remarkable fact is, of course, that the Epistle, as a whole, is the late patchwork which the extract given above so strongly resembles."

The importance of this exposure of the forged character of the Epistle of Clement will be seen by those who know that this epistle forms part of the New Testament in the oldest manuscript of the Gospels in the British Museum.

Science and Ethics, a series of six lectures delivered under the auspices of the Natural Law Research League, by W. A. Macdonald (Swan Sonnenschein, 1895; 2s. 6d.), is the product of an original thinker who has a scheme of his own for the amelioration of society. Mr. Macdonald dwells so much in the region of abstract thought, however, that we are doubtful if we understand what his scheme is, beyond that it includes getting back to the land, living in a brotherhood on natural food, dispensing as far as possible with money, and boycotting both Church and State. Mr. Macdonald is an evolutionist, and gives the ethical formula of "transformism" as, "Act in such a manner that, while engaged in promoting your own health, you are also promoting the health of others;" and its economic formula

as, "Each individual enjoys privileges equivalent to free access to the area of land required for his support." This brings us to the population question, which Mr. Macdonald would deal with dietetically. He calculates under reformed dietetics the cultivated land in the United Kingdom would support 96,000,000 of healthy adults. But then it does not. An instance of Mr. Macdonald's original way of putting things is the statement that the pressure of population is not against food, but against phosphorus, the scarcest element in food. Mr. Macdonald finds economics behind all our ethics, and would replace both by attention to natural law. His book has many suggestive thoughts and facts bearing on economics, climate, hygiene, etc.

RELIGION NOT MORALITY.

"Morality may exist independently of religious ideas."—*Quizol*.
"Religion never yet has purified morality."—*Rev. John W. Chadwick*.

THE Christian Church has assumed to regard morality as that which has not existed and cannot exist outside of Christendom. It ignores the fact that long before the Christian era the principle of morality was held in as high esteem as it ever has been during the past nineteen centuries. It is needless to mention the illustrious names of philanthropists, philosophers, poets, and others of ancient times, whose standard of morality was as high as that of any later date. Call Homer, Lycurgus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, immoral? What an insult to intelligence!

The Church impudently prates of "Christian morality"—as though the adherents of other religions (or of no religion) were utterly devoid of moral ideas and unused to moral practices.

The same code of morals exists among the people of every religion, and of those who repudiate what goes by the name of religion, as that which exists among Christians; and as to practice, the Christian Church can justly claim no advantage if, indeed, it cannot be shown that Christianity lags behind those who differ from it in that regard.

Rev. Dr. Happer, for nearly forty years a missionary in China, while dining at my home said that "in Canton (with about the same population as that of New York City) it is not usual to bar doors or fasten windows; and as to murders, more are committed in one week in New York than in one year in Canton."

Helen H. Gardener says: "In five years' experience with those gentle and faithful heathen from Japan, I have never been compelled to turn a key upon either food, jewels, or money."

Canon Farrar says: "While the English have converted one Hindoo to Christianity, they have made one hundred drunkards."

The *Christian at Work* says: "Where the English have converted one Chinaman to Christianity, they have made two hundred addicted to the opium habit."

In Williams' *Middle Kingdom* we read that the Pagan Emperor of China destroyed more than twenty thousand chests of opium rather than injure his subjects and fill his own pockets with its sale; while *Christian England* instituted the cruel wars of 1840 and 1857, which resulted in the theft of Hong Kong and the forcing of 10,000,000 pounds of opium annually upon *Heathen China*.

Captain Adams, of the *Golden Fleece*, remarks: "I saw less wickedness on the *Heathen* shores of China, India, Java, and Sumatra than on the *Christian* wharves of New York, Boston, London, and Liverpool."

HENRY M. TABER.

"My task in life," said the pastor, complacently, "consists in saving young men." "Ah!" replied the maiden, with a soulful longing; "save a good one for me, won't you?"

After a wet morning some tourists visited ruins of Dryburgh Abbey. On passing an old baptismal font, one of the party, observing that it contained a little water, asked the old man in attendance: "Is this holy water?" "Ou, ay, it's holy water, I can assure ye, for it cam' straught doon frae heaven no' half an hour syne!"

"Did you ever have any psychological experiences?" asked the professor. "Indeed, I did; a most remarkable one," said Mrs. Eyeglass. "Prophetic?" "Yes." "I should greatly like to hear it." "One night I dreamed that the sky suddenly blazed with light; the heavens were filled with a thronging host, a trumpet sounded, the dead rose from their graves, and then a voice shouted: 'Something terrible is going to happen!'" "Well?" "Well, the very next day our cook left."

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.): 11.15, G. W. Foote, "Capital Punishment: Should it be Abolished?" (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "Who was the Father of Jesus?" (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, S. E. Easton, "Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 11.30, discussion; 7.30, F. Haslam, "The Great French Revolution." (Free.) Monday, at 8, musical and dramatic entertainment. (Tickets 3d. and 6d.) Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Friday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, a lecture. Thursdays, at 7.30, free science classes.

HAMMERSMITH CLUB (1 The Grove, Broadway): Thursday, at 8.30, J. Rowney, "Bible Creation."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, members' meeting—discussion on "The Growing Duties of Christianity."

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 7, S. R. Thompson, "Slavery." Previous to the lecture Mrs. Thompson will recite "The Dying Atheist."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, a lecture.
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "And the Birth of Jesus was in this Wise."

COUNTRY.

ABERDEEN (Crooked-lane Hall): 7, John Harkis, "Why I am a Secularist." Special meeting after lecture.

BARNSELY ("Blackmoor's Head" Club-room): 7, W. Dyson, "God and Evolution."

BELFAST (Crown Chambers' Hall, 64 Royal-avenue): 3.30, R. Carroll, "Practical Life."

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

BOLTON (Borough Chambers, Rushton-street): Mr. Atkinson, "The Liverpool Toll Bar."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Life"; 2.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanley Jones, "The Church and Science."

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, discussion class; 12, elocution; 12.30, choir practice; 1, shorthand class; 2.30, lecture, "God and His Book"; 6.30, concert, vocal and instrumental.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, class—G. Faulkner, "Love, Courtship, and Marriage"; 6.30, J. Gilbert, "Individualism: an Exposition."

HANLEY SECULAR HALL (51 John-street): 11, Amye Reade, "Secularism and Immorality"; 7, "Legalised Prostitution of the Streets."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 11, Sam Standring, "Sabbatarians"; 2.30, "Co-operation, a Stepping-stone to Socialism"; 7, "How they Made the Apostles' Creed."

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

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate): 6.30, J. B. Coppock, F.O.S., "Evidences of Evolution," with lantern illustrations. (Free.)

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, John Roberts, "Has Man a Free Will?" Philosophy class suspended till new year.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. Hammond, "Our Solar System," illustrated by optical lantern.

NEWCASTLE (Irish Literary Institute, Clayton-street East): 3, C. Cohen, "Christ as a Teacher"; 7, W. Cook, "Voltaire." (Free.)

PLYMOUTH Democratic Club, Whimple-street: Charles Watts, three lectures.

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 2.30, class on "Origin of Species." Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, J. A. Ashton, "The Coal Measures," illustrated by diagrams and fossils.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. A. Lill, "The Bible as a School-book."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "The French Revolution"; 7, "Why are Men Religious?"

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite Echo office): 7, G. Selkirk, "The Triumph of Rationalism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, R. Mitchell, "Faith as it is in Jesus."

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