

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## MADAME BLAVATSKY.

THE latest book about Madame Blavatsky is entitled *A Modern Priestess of Isis*.\* The title is by no means so happy as that of *The New Cagliostro*, chosen by Mr. Foote for his open letter to that lady. Madame Blavatsky, though she claimed to have uplifted the veil of Isis, sought rather to be the foundress of a new religion than the priestess of an old one. About this modern priestess there was no austerity and little reticence. She smoked like a chimney, slanged like a music-hall entertainer (which at one time she was), and swore like a trooper. Her oaths were as round and as finished as her cigarettes. Her Theosophy demanding celibacy for the perfection of occult powers, or perhaps, I should say, assigning non-celibacy as a reason to any one disappointed at the failure to obtain such powers, it was given out that she was the widow of a Russian General, and the Governor of Erivan, who had left her husband before the marriage was consummated. Really, she ran away some time after her marriage with N. V. Blavatsky, who is still living (although, according to Mr. Sinnett's untrustworthy *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, the marriage took place in 1848, when she was about seventeen, and he "something between fifty and seventy"), without any hope of ever obtaining the generalship or governorship she credited him with, and who had ample cause to consider himself well rid of her. "She had," says the author (p. 141), "the reputation of a priestess of Venus, rather than of Isis." Her early life has not been fully unveiled, and probably is as well left in oblivion. Certainly she had *liasons* with many men.

The famous medium, D. D. Home, who knew her Russian career, speaks of her as of the *demi monde*, and mentions a *liason* with the Prince Emile de Wittgenstein, by whom she had a deformed son, who died at Kieff in 1868.†

Madame Coulomb, in a letter to Colonel J. C. Bundy, editor of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, of Chicago, in 1885, asserts: "Madame Blavatsky is not Madame Blavatsky; she is Madame Metrovitch. I have known her husband in Egypt."

It was probably the success of D. D. Home, who performed before the Czar, and received a diamond from him, that turned H. P. B. to Spiritism, at the period of life when personal charms begin to fade. Certain it is that for many years she was in the medium business.

We gain sight of her in Egypt in 1872. The *Spiritual Magazine* of April for that year (p. 176) reports: "A society of Spiritualists has been formed in Cairo, Egypt, under the direction of Madame Blavatsky, a Russian lady, assisted by several mediums." *Human Nature*, of the same date, has a longer notice, and adds (p. 190): "If you should chance to see Mr. D. Home, medium, please tell him that a friend of his late wife, 'Sacha'—a St. Petersburg friend of past years—sends him her best compliments, and wishes him prosperity." Mr. James Burns wrote in the *Daily Chronicle* (September 12, 1891):—

"It may interest your readers to learn that I corresponded with Madame Blavatsky when she was in Cairo twenty

years ago. She was then a Spiritualistic investigator of the crudest order, and enclosed a printed circular of her scheme, her quest being to find a physical medium who would go out there and give promiscuous *séances*—a practice which is discountenanced by all enlightened Spiritualists. She then knew nothing of the 'Mahatmas' or the pretended enlightenment of 'Theosophy,' or she never would have thought of opening a shop for phenomenal mediumship."

Madame Coulomb, who was with her in Egypt, has left the following account of her "spiritual" fiasco at Cairo:—

"I called again when the closet was ready, but what was my surprise when, instead of finding the kind spirits there to answer our questions, I found a room full of people, *all alive*, and using most offensive language towards the founder of the Society, saying that she had taken their money and had left them only with this, pointing at the space between the wall and the cloth, where several pieces of twine were still hanging which had served to pull through the ceiling a long glove stuffed with cotton, which was to represent the materialised hand and arm of some spirit. I went away, leaving the crowd as red as fire, ready to knock her down when she came back. Later on I met her again, and I asked her how she came to do such a thing; to which she answered that it was Madame Sebire's doing (this was a lady who lived with Madame Blavatsky), so I let this matter drop. I saw that she looked very unhappy. I called on her the next day, and on hearing that she was really in want I gave her pecuniary help, and continued doing so for some time.\*

Prof. Coues makes the assertion that Madame Blavatsky was expelled from Egypt by the police. She went to Odessa, taking with her Madame Sebire, who abused her confidence so shamefully in Cairo. They started an enterprise of making some extraordinary inks. The speculation was unsuccessful, though utilised afterwards. At Odessa she sought to go in the Russian Service to India *via* Thibet, and her vain attempt to pass that land probably afterwards suggested the location there of the mysterious Mahatmas. She then went to America, landing at New York July 7, 1873. Dr. E. Coues says: "Her real business at that time was in the secret service of her government as a Russian spy, and she was instructed, as usual, to play any part that would divert attention from the facts in the case." One reason for visiting America may be stated in her own words: "for the sake of greater protection that the citizenship of this free country affords." Russian agents in this country and in India are usually naturalised citizens. The fact that H. P. B. was one was urged on her behalf when, upon her arrival in India, she was subjected to formal police surveillance.

Madame Blavatsky went so far in her American citizenship as to get married at Philadelphia early in 1875. Her husband's name was M. C. Betanelly. He was an American from Tiflis, and in business at Philadelphia. Why a lady who had hitherto shown herself untrammelled should have contracted bigamy, with one husband at least still living, is doubtful. Perhaps she thought that at the age of forty-four it is time to become respectable. She pretended to V. S. Solovyoff (author of *A Modern Priestess*) that she was unconscious or hypnotised. Olcott "was a witness at the wedding, and signed the register" (*M. P.*, p. 163). Perhaps he was hypnotised too. The married life of Mrs. Betanelly was brief and stormy. Betanelly scratched the Russian lady, and found the very cream of Tartar. He sought for refuge in the divorce court, and the public records of Philadelphia tell how he obtained it. About the same time the wife of Henry Steele Olcott also obtained a

\* *A Modern Priestess of Isis*. Abridged and translated on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, from the Russian of Yseriold Sergyeerich Selovyoff, by Walter Leaf, Litt.D. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co.; 1895.)

† Madame Blavatsky said she adopted a son to save the honor of a friend (see *A Modern Priestess*, p. 141).

\* *Some Account of My Association with Madame Blavatsky*.

divorce, and the careers of the joint founders of the Theosophical Society were linked henceforward. But I must reserve the story of founding the Society to a new chapter.

Had H. P. B. been only a vulgar impostor and *demi-mouline*, she would certainly never have attracted the attention she did. She was much more. She was a woman of great natural ability, great experience, and great force of character. She had the real secret of all magic—a determined will—and the Committee of the Society for Psychical Research, which sent a special commissioner to India to investigate her alleged wonders there, were constrained to report: "For our own part, we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history."\*

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued).

## MR. BALFOUR'S "FOUNDATIONS."—II.

(Continued from page 162.)

*The Foundations of Belief.* Being Notes Introductory to the Study of Theology. By the Right Hon. Arthur James Balfour. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co.)

MR. BALFOUR'S attack on "Naturalism" is not, in our opinion, very formidable. It is elegant in composition, but weak and almost commonplace in argument. After laying down the propositions that no moral code can be effective which does not inspire emotions of reverence, and that its power to do this cannot be independent of its supposed origin, Mr. Balfour proceeds to ask, What is the origin of the moral law according to Naturalism? The answer is given in a long and labored passage, not without a certain academical eloquence; an eloquence that extorts admiration for its cleverness, but does not (at least in our case) excite any higher pleasure. When all is said and done, Mr. Balfour's jeremiad is but an echo of the old complaints of Ecclesiastes. Human nature is frail, life is short, and the very existence of organic beings on this planet is but "a petty episode in the history of the universe." Evolution itself will end in devolution, and as the earth cools its living forms will deteriorate and finally disappear. What is still worse, from the moral point of view, every part of man's nature has exactly the same origin; everything springs from the same matter, and arises in the same process of evolution; so that it is difficult to see "why morality should be put above appetite, or reason above pleasure."

Now there is a juggle, and no very subtle juggle either, in the use of this word "above." Strictly speaking, it is a term of space; indirectly, or metaphorically, it is a term of classification; and as classification is a matter of convenience, it is hard to see why "above" and "below" should be denied to the Naturalist any more than to the Supernaturalist. Mr. Balfour is too clever not to perceive that, on the naturalistic hypothesis, "higher" and "lower" are really terms of value; and in ethics, as in political economy, value is determined by supply and demand. Appetite is not so rare as morality, and pleasure is not so rare as reason. What is most serviceable to the race, and at the same time least available, will always be regarded as most valuable. There is no reason, in what metaphysicians call the eternal fitness of things, why gold should be more valued than lead; it is the reasons that induce us to use gold for our coinage that make us place it "above" other metals. A higher utility gives a higher position in this case; and the higher utility of reason and morality to the human race at large, as compared with appetite and pleasure, gives them their relative positions in our ethical classification. A higher utility is really a wider and longer utility. There are circumstances in which an ounce of lead would be more useful than a ton of gold; there are also circumstances in which a little appetite would be worth any quantity of ethics; but these circumstances are exceptional, and do not affect the validity of the general law which they appear to contravene.

\* *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. iii., p. 207.

Let us take another illustration from botany. The loveliest rose is supported by a stem, which is connected through a trunk with roots embedded in dirty soil. The rose cannot live apart from the stem, the trunk, and the roots; nor all of them together apart from the earth. In one sense, therefore, they are all on the same level. What is it, then, which gives the rose a "higher" position? Simply this, that it ministers more obviously to our gratification; not the gratification of one man here or there, but the gratification of all men with normal eyes and noses, in all ages and in all parts of the world. Mr. Balfour may depend upon it that no Atheist will ever value roses the less because controversial Supernaturalists cannot see why "one natural agent" should enjoy "a dignity or consideration not shared by all the others."

Mr. Balfour proceeds to deal with Determinism and Free Will in their ethical aspects. He appears to think that Naturalists universally teach Determinism, and that Supernaturalists universally teach Free Will; at least, the whole of his argument is based upon that supposition; and there was never a greater mistake. Mr. Balfour reminds his readers that, "on the naturalistic view, free will is an absurdity." Well, what was it on the view of John Calvin and Martin Luther? The fact is, whether you believe in God or in Nature, you are equally left to the reign of Necessity. Every logician has seen this. Those who have argued to the contrary have never understood the question.

Mr. Balfour, we should say, is not without at least a partial perception of the truth. He admits that "there is nothing in the theory of determinism which need modify the substance of the moral law," and that "no argument against good resolutions or virtuous endeavors can fairly be founded upon necessitarian doctrines." For which relief much thanks! But we soon find Mr. Balfour arguing that Determinism conflicts with the sense of personal responsibility. His ironical criticism, however, does not amount to an explanation. He does not tell us what he means by "personal responsibility." All through his book, indeed, he evades the "personal responsibility" of defining his terms. In the absence of definition on Mr. Balfour's part, we have only to remark that "personal responsibility" is just as real, and just as operative, if it is generated by the external influence of human society as if it were generated by the external influence of a supernatural ruler of the universe.

Mr. Balfour denies the Naturalist any rational devotion to Humanity.

"Of the combination of causes which first converted a dead organic compound into the living progenitors of humanity, science, indeed, as yet knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings famine, disease, and mutual slaughter, fit nurseries of the future lords of creation, have gradually evolved, after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to feel that it is vile, and intelligence enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past, and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish. The uneasy consciousness, which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe, will be at rest. Matter will know itself no longer. 'Imperishable monuments' and 'immortal deeds,' death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as though they had never been. Nor will anything that is better or worse for all that the labor, genius, devotion, and suffering of man have striven through countless generations to effect."

But is not all this a greater impeachment of God than of Humanity? If this is all that God has been able, or willing, to do on this planet, he deserves not our worship, but our hatred or contempt.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Adhere to your act and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant, and broken the monotony of a decorous age.—R. W. Emerson.

## THE SUPERNATURAL NO GUIDE FOR MAN.

*(Concluded from page 179.)*

THERE are doubtless many persons who sincerely believe in the supernatural; but it should be remembered that belief is not knowledge. It is quite true that we have faith in much of which we have no actual knowledge, and in every-day life we are compelled frequently to exercise such faith. For instance, we believe in countries which we have never seen, and in the existence of persons with whom we have never come in contact. But such belief is not opposed to knowledge, because proof could easily be obtained; whereas the belief in the supernatural is, inasmuch as no one pretends that he knows what the supernatural really is. We should always be careful not to take for granted, without proof, that which is improbable. If a man asserted that one thing was in two places at the same time, we should not stop to ask for the evidence that he had to produce, because no amount of evidence could serve to substantiate as a truth that which experience has shown could not be. There are many subjects which no amount of testimony could prove, simply because the matter is of such a nature as not to admit of proof.

The same principle applies to the belief in the supernatural. A man may tell us that he has seen a miracle, and that, therefore, he knows from experience that the supernatural exists; and he brings a dozen persons to verify his statement. Now, the testimony may be unimpeachable, but the conclusion arrived at perfectly erroneous. The event which he describes may have happened, but how is it to be proved to be a miracle? The forces in operation in its production may be to him unknown, and, while his evidence may vouch for the fact, the cause must be a matter for inquiry. The assertion that the forces producing it were supernatural is a gratuitous one, and utterly opposed to everything that we know. Belief should have a rational basis, or it is wild and chimerical. Faith is good in its place, but it must always be confined within the sphere of knowledge. A man can have faith in that which he never saw, and perhaps never will see; but the thing in which he has faith must be a possible one, or his faith is misplaced, and he himself deluded. In our opinion, faith in the supernatural is an unreasoning faith, pre-supposing a knowledge which we do not and cannot possess, since a knowledge of that which may lie beyond nature is an impossibility. The sphere of faith is legitimate enough, but it is not a sphere distinct from that of knowledge, but one which arises out of it, and should never go beyond it.

Even if it could be demonstrated as a fact that Christ, as a supernatural being, existed about two thousand years ago, of what value would that be to us? Daily, on land and at sea, men, women, and children suffer agony, privation, and some die heartrending deaths; people are struck by lightning and consumed by fire, and Christ renders no assistance. The sick pine away, the widow is starved, the fatherless weep, and the poor die through starvation, and yet the supernatural Jesus helps them not. It is of no avail to us to be told that centuries ago he raised the dead; what we need now is the power to improve the living, so that life shall be relieved of the many evils which exercise so sorely oppress it. But supposing Jesus did select the best subjects for the operation. Had he raised from the dead such men as Confucius, Aristotle, Socrates, or Plato, the world might have benefited by the resuscitation. But he left these great men in their graves, and raised objects of no intellectual importance to mankind. We hear nothing of their service to society after their resurrection; it was therefore a waste of energy, and indicated, upon the part of Christ, a lack of good judgment.

Besides, the use that we are told the supernatural is to be put to in the future is not either useful or cheering. When Christ comes to execute judgment at the last day, it is said, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light; the stars are to fall, and the very heavens are to be shaken. He is to come in the clouds in great glory, and gather his elect from the four winds of the earth; further, the heavens are to pass away, and the globe is to be burnt up, while all unbelievers are to meet with a fate terrible to contemplate. The beneficent

character of the supernatural will be entirely destroyed if it is employed, as we are assured it will be, to raise all from the dead, and then save only a few, while the many are to be assigned to eternal misery. To an intelligent, humane mind it would appear better to let the whole human family sleep on for ever than to awaken them, and then to doom the great majority to perpetual suffering. To believe that there is a supernatural power capable of doing this may be possible to minds that have been hardened by a cruel theology; but a being who could perform such revolting deeds would, in our opinion, be a demon, and not a loving and merciful Savior. To picture a supernatural being who could design and carry out such a diabolical proceeding is an idea so odious that we wonder any rational creature can believe in it. But, unfortunately, the belief does obtain, and our duty is to point out its monstrous character, and thereby lessen, as much as possible, its pernicious influence upon weak and credulous minds.

But it is said that the belief in the supernatural inspires hope of everlasting happiness. Suppose it does, the fact still remains that the orthodox supernatural theory involves the dread of everlasting misery, and the further melancholy fact that only a few are to experience that happiness, and that the many are to endure the misery. If it is said that the hope of heaven influences people to be good, the answer is that, if so, selfishness is the basis of such goodness. That is not the highest moral teaching that could be inculcated. Right doing should not be the result of the desire for merely personal reward in another world, but it ought to be prompted by the wish to improve the general community in this life. If Christianity has not the force to ensure upright conduct without its doctrine of rewards and punishments, then the faith is placed on a lower level than the old Pagan morality. Dean Milman acknowledges that, when the belief in the supernatural was at its height in the Roman Empire, morals were inferior to those that existed in the best Pagan times. And we have no doubt that, if the belief in the supernatural ceased to-morrow, virtue would still remain, and human affections would continue to adorn and elevate the race. Good deeds spring from the natural, not from the supernatural; and useful actions originate on earth, they are not importations from heaven.

Our aim is to urge upon mankind the importance of confining their attention to the known and knowable, and those are only to be found, so far as we can discover, within the domain of the natural. To indulge in idle speculations as to some supernatural power is to divert men's minds from the real business of life, and to take their attention from the study of those subjects which have proved useful in aiding the civilisation of the world. The belief in the supernatural is not only no guide to us, but it has led to strife, divisions, persecutions, and insanity; and further, even among men of intellect, it has caused incorrect thinking, loose reasoning, the drawing of false conclusions as to the facts of life, and the substitution of wild imagining for the realities of existence.

The believer in the supernatural talks of Jesus as though he had more than human love for man, and a superhuman desire to effect his welfare. The Secularist maintains that the same high and lofty feeling of philanthropy, of brotherly love, may beat in the human bosom, and needs only wise and patient cultivation to bring forth golden fruit. He declares that there can be no grander impulse, no loftier, more animating incentive, than an honest, steadfast desire to benefit the whole human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

## Real Hell.

As the idea of a material heaven was doubtless borrowed from natural phenomena such as mirages, so too was borrowed the idea of a material hell from the volcanoes found along the Mediterranean, where the idea had birth. Affidavits have been made by sea captains and sailors, representing they saw the Devil bearing into a belching volcano a lost soul. E. G. Squier, in his *Nicaragua*, in describing the volcano of Masaya, says: "Some confessors have imposed no other penance than to visit this volcano." He informs his readers that priests are in the habit of taking their parishioners to the summit of an open volcano, with the surging molten lava in full view, and then telling them of the undying misery of those doomed to spend an eternity writhing in these lurid flames.—*Progressive Thinker*.

## WONDERS IN GOZO.

Is any reader so ignorant as not to know where Gozo is? I confess with shame that I never heard of the place until I read an article in the *Month* for January, 1893, giving an account of the wonders which have recently occurred there. The obscurity of the place, however, is no argument against the wonders. Many educated Romans in the first century had probably never heard of Nazareth or Capernaum. Lourdes and Knock were not celebrated until the Virgin and the pilgrims found them out. Miracles are usually done in a corner, and for them, as for kissing, a dark corner is best—Galilee or Gascony, or Mayo or Malta, near which island Gozo is situated, and, like it, afflicted by the scourge of English heresy, “a horrible monster dwelling at the very doors of the inhabitants, meeting them at every turn, and which they detest with a passion which rules their lives.”

Notwithstanding this sacrilegious environment, the suitability of the Gozitans to receive a divine revelation is indisputable. In their goodness (shown by their poverty and hatred of heresy) “there is a simplicity which is beautifully child-like, and which probably attracted Our Lady’s favors to them.” Now—as of old—the faith of a child is the passport to the kingdom of Heaven.

In this pious island there is, or was in 1883, a little chapel containing a picture of the Assumption of the Virgin, “borne up on the heads of three cherubs,” and steadied by “four angels, two on either hand.” The place is so remote that Mass was rarely said there; but the country people, especially the women, went in to pray occasionally. “Lord bless their little hearts, they think it’s all right, and don’t know no better; but they’re the victims o’ gammon,” to quote the words of Mr. Weller, senior.

One of these “victims” in Gozo, named Carmela Grima, was passing the sanctuary in June, 1883, “reciting certain favorite prayers,” when she heard a voice saying, “Come! Come! Come! Come to-day, for you will not be able to come back for a whole year.” She accordingly entered the chapel and knelt before the picture, from which the same voice spoke again, and said: “Say three Hail Marys in honor of the three days that my body remained in the tomb.” The words do not seem remarkable, but it is presumption to judge a message from heaven. . . . Carmela repeated the invocations, and, as no more was said, she departed, and, in obedience to the “heavenly vision,” did not return for a year. What is more remarkable in a woman, she for two years kept silence about what she had heard.

This silence, which, as the writer in the *Month* remarks, “has something of the supernatural about it,” she at last broke. “She was moved to open her heart to a youth of holy life, named Francesco Portelli, who shared her devotion to Our Lady. When she asked him whether he ever heard anything unusual while praying before her picture, during his frequent visits to the sanctuary, he told her in confidence that on six different occasions Our Lady had spoken to him from her picture, and had exhorted him to have great devotion to the ‘wounds on our Lord’s shoulder, caused by bearing the Cross.’”

Francesco was not able to keep a secret so well as Carmela. His hints concerning the loquacious picture, which, however, was somewhat monotonous in its communications (like the four beasts in the Apocalypse, Rev. iv. 8), caused “vague rumors to spread themselves abroad.” “A spontaneous, irresistible burst of devotion ran over the whole island like wildfire . . . the field adjoining the chapel was black with the kneeling multitude.” It was now high time for the Church to “regulate the devotion”—i. e., to secure its share of the spoil. Carmela and Francesco were examined before the Bishop. The woman readily told what she had heard or imagined. The youth was very reticent, “and confined himself to briefly answering the questions put to him on oath.” The difference is significant. Carmela was a sincere fanatic, crazed with hard work, praying, and fasting. Francesco was a clever rogue, who knew that his testimony would be more valuable if reluctantly given. On a subsequent occasion, in 1890, Carmela disclosed to the Bishop further revelations, “several of which are reported to take the form of prophecies.” These, however, “remain sealed and locked up from public view” (no doubt awaiting

their fulfilment), like the utterances of the “Seven thunders” in the Revelation (Rev. x. 4).

“The graces, both spiritual and temporal,” which, of course, have followed, “disprove the theory which may occur to the English reader that the story was a fabrication” (or a delusion?) of Carmela and Francesco. “Of these graces—the cures professedly miraculous—a register has been kept by order of the Bishop, after careful examination on oath.” “Therein may be found many a beautiful story of faith and answer to prayer”—e. g., The first person cured was Francesco’s mother, Vincenza Portelli, in November, 1886. She suffered from heart disease and dropsy in an aggravated form. The doctors pronounced her incurable (cf. Luke viii. 43). Her three pious sons—hers was a praying family—“recited the Rosary, and promised to light a lamp before the holy picture.” The old lady was restored to health. It should be observed that this is one of the best authenticated miracles on record. It was deposed to on oath by Vincenza and her family. No doubt the doctors were questioned. The heart disease might be a nervous malady, curable by imagination; but what of the dropsy? Finally, it is published to the world within ten years, while all the parties, or at least most of them, are alive. Can we believe in the cures of Peter’s wife’s mother, and Publius’s father (in the same neighborhood, Acts xxviii. 8), and deny that of Francesco’s mother?

Somewhat less marvellous was the case of Maria Cutajar. She was in great grief because she could not nurse any of her children. She promised to offer her gold earrings at the shrine, and to visit it herself, fasting on bread and water. She felt an instantaneous change come over her, and clasped her infant to the breast. The milk-man came no more to the Cutajar’s door.

Our Lady of Gozo, like her son, could cure at a distance. “Some of the oil from the lamp, which was now always kept burning before the picture, has been the chief vehicle of Our Lady’s healing power.” An application of it to her teeth cured Maria Cefai of lockjaw. Carmela Sultana, whose hand was withered and paralysed, was cured by it. Saverio Busuttill regained the use of his limbs, Angela Borg of her eyes. Maria Caruana broke her hip; the doctors could not set it to rights on account of her age, but a prayer to a picture of Our Lady of Gozo cured her in a moment. Margherita Bartolo, a girl of twenty-seven, had suffered for eleven years from an internal complaint. The doctors despaired of curing her, and advised her to go to Valetta to undergo an operation. Margherita, however, like the anonymous woman in the Gospel, had spent her all on the physicians, and determined to try the Virgin, who was only five miles off. She had nothing to offer but “a Mass with a Sermon” (this does not seem a high bid), but it was enough; her cure was instantaneous.

“The number of *ex votos* (waxen effigies of arms, legs, eyes, babies, intermingled with crutches, surgical appliances, etc.) which cover the walls of the little chapel tell a tale of favors received, far more graphically than can any written record.” (Where are the offerings of those who were not cured?) But the most pleasing signs of gratitude are the cases, in every part of the chapel, densely packed with gold earrings and other gold ornaments, “to be sold for the expense of building the new church which is soon to replace the present sanctuary.” It was with such trinkets that Aaron, thirty-three centuries ago, constructed the Golden Calf. Has the world grown wiser in three millenniums? The delay in erecting the new church has been caused by the avarice of the owner of the land on which the old chapel stands, who thought he should share with Mother Church the “unearned increment” caused by Our Lady’s communications. There is always a Judas or an Ananias in such cases. The law-courts, however, have decided for the bishop, and the only fear now is that the coming publicity may tarnish the isle “which is still radiant with the touch of Our Lady’s choice.” The footsteps of a Zola may one day pollute the sacred soil of Gozo.

One thought more, as the preachers say. Where does this record of folly, fraud, and fabrication appear? In a high-class monthly periodical sold at half-a-crown, and presumably read by the richer, if not the most intelligent Catholics. Do the accomplished Jesuits who edit the *Month* believe in such stuff? I trow not. Why, then, do they publish it? I turn to the G. O. B., and find the answer in the words of an old Freethinker called Jeremiah, whom

the authorities of his time disliked so much that they threw him into a dungeon: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land [Surely not wonderful, Jeremiah, however horrible]; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so." So it is still. For one educated Catholic who would smile at the restored hip of Mrs. Ceruana, and the renewed lactation of Maria Cutajar, half-a-dozen "simple people" will be builded up in their most holy faith.

While supernatural religion exists there will always be fools who believe in miracles, and rogues to supply the demand. The wonders will be repeated which have occurred in Gozo, and Knock, and Lourdes, and Loretto, and Galilee, and Judea.

JAMES A. RICHARDSON.

### THE CONSOLATIONS OF BELIEF.

We often hear the serene confidence of the believer contrasted with the anguish and doubt which are supposed to rack the mind of the sceptic. But what must be the thoughts of an earnest and honest Christian when he contemplates the fate of those near and dear to him in the light of the Christian doctrines of heaven and hell? Here is the testimony of one of the ablest commentators upon the New Testament, Albert Barnes. He says: "I confess, when I look on a world of sinners and of sufferers, upon death-beds and graveyards, upon the world of woe, filled with hosts to suffer for ever and ever, and see my friends, my parents, my family, my fellow citizens; when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and anger; when I see the great mass of them wholly unconverted, and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet he does not do it, I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark, dark, to my soul, and I cannot disguise it." As an honest man, Albert Barnes could not get away from the evidence that the doctrine of eternal torments was taught in the New Testament, as he believed, revealed by God; and he was equally unable to conceal that it was not in accordance with the dictates of his own reason and conscience. Where is the perfect serenity of such a faith? There was more serenity in those callous divines who frankly threw over all the humaner feelings of nature, and believed that with God they should rejoice in the torments of the non-elect. In Mr. Wheeler's *Christian Doctrine of Hell* there are many examples of such pious utterances, and I have culled a few more samples of Christian barbarity from the sound old orthodox sermons of the past:—

"When they (the saints) shall see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state and the state of others who were by nature, and perhaps by practice, no more sinful and ill-deserving than they, it will give them more a sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace to them. Every time they look upon the damned it will excite in them a likely and admiring sense of the grace of God, in making them so to differ. The sight of hell's torments will exalt the happiness of the saints for ever."—*Rev. Nathanael Emmons's "Sermons," xi.*

"The happiness of the elect in heaven will, in part, consist in witnessing the torments of the damned in hell. And among these it may be their own children, parents, husbands, wives, and friends on earth. One part of the business of the blessed is to celebrate the doctrine of reprobation. While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who, instead of taking the part of those miserable objects, will say, 'Amen, hallelujah, praise the Lord.'—*Rev. N. Emmons's "Sermons," vii.*

"When the damned have drunken down whole draughts of brimstone one day, they must do the same another day. The eye shall be tormented with the sight of devils, the ears with the hideous yellings and outcries of the damned in flames, the nostrils shall be smothered, as it were, with shall fry in flames."—*Rev. I. Ambrose's Discourse on "Dooms-day."*

"The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the judge in the condemnation of her ungodly husband. The godly husband shall say amen to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom. The godly parents shall say hallelujah at the passing of the sentence of their ungodly child. And the godly child shall from the heart approve the damnation of his wicked parents who begot him, and the mother who bore him."—*Rev. Thomas Boston's "Fourfold State," p. 333.*

What is this but saying that people in heaven will be a great deal worse than those on earth? Who can derive consolation from such a faith? The idea of a hereafter in which but one sentient being, and that the worst that ever lived, should be tortured without purpose, because, if "for ever," it must be purposeless, is repugnant to any humane mind.

The contemplation of hell for any we love is calculated to drive people mad. It has led many into asylums. If people honestly believed such a doctrine, they ought to go mad. But they never realise hell as for themselves, or for those they care for. Hell is always for the uncared for, for the sinners; while the believers are the saints. As long as the doctrine endures, it will be a proof of the essential barbarism of Christianity, and Christians will do well to be modest in dilating upon the consolations of their religion.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

### GEMS FROM LICHTENBERG (1742-1799).

(Selected and translated from his works by F. MALIBRAN.)

The works of Lichtenberg can serve us as the most wonderful divining-rod; wherever he makes a jest, there lies hidden a problem.—*Goethe.*

MATERIALISM is the asymptote of psychology.

The wooden saints have done more than the living ones.

I have played at times the Atheist in Society merely: *exercitii gratia.*

God created man in his image, probably means that man created God after his image.

Doubt everything at least once, even if it were the proposition: 2 and 2 makes 4.

Is not our conception of God but merely personified incomprehensibility?

There are plenty of people who can believe everything they choose to believe; what happy creatures to be sure!

I would willingly sacrifice a part of my life in order to get to know what has been the average position of the barometer in Paradise.

The world will get to grow so acute that it will become as ridiculous to believe in God as to believe in ghosts.

... he was a clever youth, he was hardly six years old, yet he could recite the Paternoster backwards.

The almighty must be very fond of us, indeed; see how often he visits us in the shape of rain!

It is to the thoughtless veneration which people have for old laws, old customs, and old religion that we owe every evil in this world.

The death of a gifted and talented man produces upon me the greatest sorrow, because the world has more need of such men than heaven.

Man is, perhaps, half spirit and half matter, just like the polypus is half plant and half animal; the strangest creatures are to be found there where extremes meet.

I think it will be hardly possible to prove that we are the work of a supreme being, rather than that of an imperfect one, who created us as a pastime.

Is it not strange that most people fight so willingly for a religion, and yet live so unwillingly after the precepts it teaches?

I have read Heydenreich's *Letters on Atheism*, and I must admit that, contrary to the author's intention, the letters written by the unbelievers appear more powerfully written than those of the believers.

Already, for many years, I have thought this world might be the production of a subordinate being, and I have not been able to shake off this idea.

The men who invented the absolution of sins through latin formulæ are responsible for the greatest part of the corruption in this world.

It is really astonishing how we have come to base our belief in God upon obscure conceptions of causes about which we know and can know nothing, because all conclusions based upon an originator of the universe will never be anything else but anthropomorphism.

Dialogue: A.—"The nuns have armed themselves against unchastity not only by a vow, but also by strong iron bars on their windows." B.—"Quite so; but there would be no difficulty in making them break their vow, provided we succeeded in breaking the iron bars."

What I believe forms so many Deists among thoughtful and intellectual people is the unchangeable laws of nature. The more a man makes himself acquainted with these laws, the more evident it appears to him that what now takes place has always taken place, and that it has never been otherwise, and that miracles no more happen now-a-days than they did in the past.

### POOR PRICE HUGHES!

THE Rev. Hugh Price Hughes was announced to preach at Holy Trinity Church, Rockferry, on Tuesday evening week. It also occurred to two waggish Secularists, of Liverpool and Birkenhead respectively, that that very evening would, to them, be a most opportune occasion for paying the aforementioned place a visit for the purpose of making a critical survey of its architecture as it presented itself to them exteriorly. So there they betook themselves, but not before it had dawned upon their economic minds of the advisability of killing as many birds as they could with the one shot. And, miraculously to relate, it crossed their mental horizon of the existence of four hundred odd pamphlets that were safely ensconced in a cupboard on the premises of the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S. Pamphlets not dealing with the various styles of architecture, by the by, but copies of the famous one written by the President of the N.S.S. on "The Atheist Shoemaker and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes," etc.

In due time they arrived at their destination, secured the assistance of some youths, and thereafter addressed themselves—one and all—to the distribution of the said pamphlets to those bent on listening to the flowery rhetoric of the rev. gentleman. The pamphlets were gracefully and, apparently, gratefully received, the men carefully lodging them in their inner pockets, and the ladies deftly folding and afterwards securely clutching them, after the manner they do their purses—of course, going to church, they had wisely left them at home. Consequently, the pamphlets were the sole occupants of that safe and enviable position.

During the distribution one noteworthy incident transpired. Two men in clerical garb approached the side entrance, one being no less a personage than the notorious reacher of the evening; and will it be credited that the distributor at that entrance, with a temerity worthy of the Victoria Cross, tendered the rev. gentleman himself a copy? Whereupon he—well, meekly declined with a doleful shake of the head. The gentleman accompanying him, unparson-like, *gracefully* accepted a copy with the query: "Is this from Foote?" "Yes." "Thank you; we expected this."

I have not heard how the rev. gentleman acquitted himself that evening; but it requires no extraordinary acquaintance with physio-psychological science to aver that the knowledge of the fact of the distribution of that pamphlet among his audience would unduly involve a tremendous expenditure of energy in the endeavor to keep it from occupying the focus of his consciousness, even in the delivery of a sermon. Imagine the poor man's case as from the pulpit he spies from the pockets of the men the edges of the pamphlet jeeringly peering at him, and, worst of all, in their entirety from the graceful grip of the ladies, loudly mocking him. For well he knoweth the contents thereof. The singing has ceased, and the last note of the organ has slowly faded away. The text he is giving out, and, while doing so, has a haunting fear that, as he proceeds with the delivery of his sermon, he will be disconcerted by that blessed pamphlet, twisting itself, as it were, from beneath his pressure of it to infraconsciousness. He makes a desperate effort, and, hurrah—succeeds; and joyously he dashes along with a sweep of fervid pulpit palaver. But, alas! a reactionary moment is at hand, and with lightning rapidity that pamphlet has twisted itself and proudly soars on the crest of the uppermost wave; then, in consciousness, and as a consequence, disarranging all his oratorical toilette. Another supreme effort at pressing it down; but again it is quickly uppermost, until, in sheer desperation, he exclaims with Macbeth, "Take any shape but that." Let us commiserate the poor man, for, verily, the way of the transgressor is hard.

Notwithstanding their visit, my friends are unable to acquaint me of the style of architecture of Holy Trinity Church.

JOHN ROBERTS.

The world has been soldier-ridden and priest-ridden to death—the soldier in the saddle, and Jack priest on the crupper.—*Puck*.

Whoever is afraid of submitting any question to the test of free discussion is more in love with his own opinion than with truth.—*J. S. Mill*.

### ACID DROPS.

RELIGIOUS nuisances are hard to suppress; witness the longevity of Salvation Army bands. At Bingera, in New South Wales, the Salvation Army bangers and toolsters were voted "the boss nuisance in the district," and the municipality instructed John Plunkett, their inspector of nuisances, to take action against them when they next made a row in the streets. He did so, and the Salvationists went to law and got big damages against him; but he wouldn't pay, and the municipality wouldn't pay for him, so he is in prison for contempt of court. Happy Salvationists! The world is all before them where to choose.

Mr. James Monro, late Commissioner of Police in London, is engaged as a medical missionary in Nuddea, Lower Bengal. His antecedents cause the natives to look upon him with suspicion. Some even regard him as a Government spy. Such is the reward of piety in Bengal!

Jesse Hitchcock, driver of the Post Office mailcart from Leicester to Loughborough, has been committed for trial on a charge of stealing packages. When arrested he had eaten two packets of bridecake, and was just reading a hymn-book. Jesse Hitchcock's literary tastes will be accommodated if he happens to reside for some time in prison.

Providence works with blind impartiality. During the recent earthquake in Sicily a church fell in while the people were worshipping, and a number of persons were buried in the ruins. We commend this incident to the attention of Christians.

The Faversham Guardians have unanimously requested Miss Burgess to resign. She is the matron's assistant, and she was requested to go to the Workhouse chapel one Sunday and take charge of the girls during service. This she refused to do, and she explained to the Guardians that she had not entered their service as a Churchwoman, and that she disliked the Church service. She declined to give any assurance that she would not make a similar refusal if occasion should arise again. She has therefore to look for another situation, and we hope she will find one where the employers do not hire their servants "body and soul."

That delightful *répertoire* of religious trash, the *Christian Herald and Signs of the Times* (March 28), makes the late F. Douglass out to have been a very good Christian. It also gives a story of "An Infidel's Death-bed." The nameless infidel, however, was not converted. "He had," says the writer, "found it hard work to stupefy conscience, but he persisted in his effort, and he did it; and, as far as is known, continued an infidel up to the time of his death, like Voltaire, Tom Paine, and Shelley; and in such a case he is now with them, crying out for a drop of water to cool the tip of his tongue, in the abode of eternal despair." Well, even the *Christian Herald* has learnt that not all infidels are converted. Some day it may find they are not crying out either in the abode of eternal despair.

The correspondence in the *Church Times* on "Why Working Men Don't Come to Church" has brought out a letter from W. Carlile, the head of the Church Army. He believes in street services, and, above all, in the power of the magic lantern, "summer as well as winter," as a means of arresting the sinner and instructing the saint. "Make religion an entertainment" seems to be the modern prescription.

The *Liverpool Post* is responsible for the statement that a boy who is a member of a church choir, and whose father is superintendent of a Sunday-school, gave the following account of the origin of the Catholic Church:—"The Catholic Church was established by Henry VIII., who started the Reformation against the Church of Rome. Henry did not really wish for a reformation, but only started it to frighten the Pope, with whom he had quarrelled."

Our Liverpool contemporary appears to see that a little profanity is relished by ordinary readers. We see put amongst a column of its "Facts and Fancies" a story of a village Sunday-school boy in a farming district, who was asked by the minister how Jacob knew it was Joseph sending for him from Egypt; whereupon the boy replied: "Cause he see'd his name on the waggons."

Prebendary Reynolds might have cautioned teachers against reading to juveniles the savage details of the wars of the Israelites, and such statements as "the Lord is a man of war." The Peace Association has been seeking to substitute a manual of their own on peace and war for the worship of naval and military heroes cultivated in some school books.

but they will hardly effect their object while the Old Testament fills juvenile minds with notions of blood and battle.

Dr. Bilsborrow, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford, has been replying to Dr. Moorhouse, the Anglican Bishop of Manchester, on the question, "Was St. Peter Bishop of Rome?" He adduces the usual questionable authorities, and reveals the weakness of his case by contending that "Indeed, St. Peter might have held the Roman Episcopate, and held it to his death, without residing in Rome for one hour." The spectacle of these rival bishops belaboring one another on behalf of the claims of their rival churches is, however, an exhilarating one, and some Freethinkers may be found to exclaim: "Go it, Bilsborrow! Pitch in, Moorhouse!"

One point insisted upon by the Bishop of Salford, in his controversy with the Bishop of Manchester, is that "no writer, Pagan or Christian, Rationalist or Infidel, Protestant or Catholic, can be quoted who ever denied that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, until the time of the Waldenses, in the thirteenth century." But what nonsense is this. The Bishop would find it a hard task to strictly prove that the legends are of much earlier date than their denial, and there is the undoubted fact that, when the Christian Church was triumphant, there was no criticism upon its pretensions, or the critics and their writings were ruthlessly put out of the way.

The *Huddersfield Examiner* reports a "powerful and impressive" sermon at the Buxton-road Wesleyan Chapel by the Rev. G. Talalun Newton, of London, on "Elijah, the National Reformer." This godly hero of the man of God invited 450 priests of Baal to an open-air exhibition of miracles, jeered at them because they had no petroleum to make their sacrifices blaze, and, not satisfied with his victory, pursued his defeated rivals, shouting, "Let not one of them escape"; and thus roused the mob to slaughter the whole 450 in cold blood. Truly a fine hero and "National Reformer" to extol in the nineteenth century!

Hugh Price Hughes had a paragraph in last week's *Methodist Times* on "The Genesis of Great Ideas." We wish he would explain the genesis of that great idea of the "Atheist Shoemaker."

Mr. Hughes announces that the High Church party has captured not only Mr. Tom Mann, but also "Nunquam" (Mr. R. Blatchford) of the *Clarion*. We regard this announcement with very great suspicion. Mr. Hughes's "trustworthy" sources of information are generally of the opposite character.

A Welsh correspondent of the *Daily News* says: "All sorts of dirty dodges are being resorted to in furtherance of the anti-Disestablishment crusade in Wales. The Nonconformists, it is represented by the sponsors to these memorials, are about (if they can) to pull down the churches; tithes are to be appropriated for the erection of theatres; and churchyards are to be 'destroyed.' One lady actually had the audacity to ask a parishioner to sign 'the petition' without reading it, and she naively checked any thirst for knowledge in this respect on the part of her victim by covering the text with her hand."

Religious people, who identify the cause of God with their own, are nearly always unscrupulous. The names of Sunday-school children and ignorant old women were largely used to hinder Charles Bradlaugh from taking his seat as representative of Northampton.

The special correspondent of the *Daily News* says a postmaster had been asking one woman why she had signed, and it seemed they had told her that, if this Bill passed, any husband leaving a little money to keep his widow could never be quite sure she would get it.

The special correspondent of the *Daily News* says: "How are you getting on with the petition?" a young Churchman was asked here in Aberayron, a day or two ago. "Oh, getting on well. Get a good haul every morning when the tramps turn out from the workhouse."

Mr. Howell is cited as saying: "I hear that the arguments used in urging the people to sign the petition are that the churches will be demolished, the graveyards ploughed up, and that Popery will establish itself throughout Wales."

"I wished to be buried by the side of my wife in the churchyard," said one man. Somebody had convinced him that, if Disestablishment really came about, church and churchyard, with all their solemn associations, would be swept away.

"I am told," says this special correspondent, "that Cardiganshire families are all expected to raise, at least,

one pig and one parson. It is, no doubt, a tradition that ought to be rejected as out of keeping with the reverence due to the cloth. Nevertheless, it affords a piquant indication of the feeling between Wales and her parsons."

A Lyons Roman Catholic paper, called *La France Libre*, has had a series of violent clerical attacks on the Freemasons of that city. Lists of names have been given, and employers have been exhorted to have nothing to do with those who were thus denounced. Among the persons thus brought into prominence is an organist at one of the Lyons churches, and the result was that he was dismissed from his employment.

The organist brought an action for libel against the paper, claiming 3,000 francs damages. A printer who is also aggrieved in the same way has brought an action to recover 2,000 francs. The case, which attracted to the court a large gathering of priests and friends of the clerical party, resulted in a verdict for the plaintiffs for the amount claimed, but judgment was postponed.

The Rev. W. Gilby Smith, rector of Dorsington, near Alcester, Worcestershire, was missing from his home, and, as a result of a continued search, a note was found which, it is stated, shows that the rev. gentleman contemplated suicide by drowning himself in the Avon. Subsequently he was traced to the river, a considerable distance from the rectory, and footmarks were seen on the river bank. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane."

The Rev. W. Jackson, vicar of Monks Kirby, was fined the usual penalty of five shillings at Lutterworth Sessions for not sending his boy regularly to the elementary school, of which he is manager. He pleaded that his boy was so advanced that regular attendance was unnecessary; but the Bench held that he must obey the same rules and regulations as people of lower station so long as his son remained in an elementary school.

More mejums in trouble! A dispatch from Dora, Ind., to the *Chicago Record* says: "Jacob Garnett's residence was the scene of great excitement when 'Professor' Henderson, of Anderson, and 'Doctor' Small of this city, spirit mediums, were exposed, and a free fight ensued. Garnett is a Spiritualist, and had invited Henderson and Small to hold a circle. The audience was treated to various materialisations, while tables and chairs danced, and spirits addressed those present in poor English. The little town was interested, and last night the attendance was larger than ever. During a spirit conversation Wilbert Teagarten struck a match, disclosing Henderson talking through the large end of a tin horn ten feet long, while Small capered around the room. The circle broke up, furniture was overturned, and Small and Henderson were knocked down and the tables piled on them; but they finally escaped."

The *Rockford Register Gazette* reports that William Whipple, of Sycamore, one of the wealthiest farmers in that vicinity, recently became violently insane. He had been attending a series of revival meetings at the M. E. Church at Charter-grove, and became impressed with the idea that he was the prohibition candidate for president. He was adjudged insane, and taken to Elgin. Revivals are as dangerous as brandy for the manufacture of insanity.

The *Dundee Weekly News* reports that the Glasgow police have received information of the death of William Dobbie (62), missionary, which occurred a few days ago under tragic circumstances. While kneeling in prayer at a prayer meeting he suddenly expired.

The Wesleyan missionary of Colon, the Rev. C. M. Clark, sends out a circular asking for subscriptions and gifts to a Boys' Brigade, the object of which is the advancement of Christ's kingdom by means of military drill. It is a truly Christian method, and shows the skill of men of God in raking in the shekels.

A *Daily News* leader mentions that in the diary of a young lady who went to a course on Biblical criticism were found these words: "The Elohist says, 'Oh, how awfully dull this is! Do look at that girl's bonnet.'" The Elohist certainly never said such things, and the remarks apparently attributed to him are a nineteenth-century gloss.

The clericals continue active in their opposition to the Religious Freedom Bill in Hungary. In the debate in the Upper House the number of votes for and against the Bill was level. The President gave his casting vote with the Ayes, in order that the clauses of the Bill might be debated. The first two paragraphs of the Bill were accepted by small majorities. When it came, however, to the important chapter removing all disabilities from persons professing no religion, the old fight began over again, and this section of

the Bill was rejected by a majority of eight votes, a fact which will, no doubt, lead to the Bill being thrown out. The Liberal party in Hungary are decided that, if Religious Freedom does not mean this, it has very little meaning.

The concern of the Church for the real elevation of the people was displayed by the attempt of the Archbishop of Canterbury to thwart the new Sunday Bill, brought before the House of Peers by Lord Hobhouse. This Bill did not propose to repeal the intolerant Act of George III., but only to amend it, so that lectures on science, ethics, or literature might be delivered if not for the pecuniary benefit of the promoters. To this modest amendment the Primate would not give his assent, and the probability is that Lord Hobhouse's well-meaning Bill, if it ever reaches the Lower House, will do so in a maimed and lamed condition. Meanwhile Secularists go on with lectures as usual.

The late gale was accompanied with much loss of life, and God's houses seem to have specially suffered. In London the cross on the top of St. Thomas's, at Shepherd's Bush, toppled over. At Wolverhampton four pinnacles of St. Peter's were blown down. At Peterborough two pinnacles of St. John's, and at Newport Pagnal three pinnacles of the parish church tower, were destroyed. At Cambridge one side of the Salvation Army barracks was blown in, and at Nuneaton the church was much damaged.

A portion of the roof of St. Michael's Church, Bath, was blown off, and the pinnacle of St. Bartholomew's Church was blown down, and the front part of the building was so much damaged that the service had to be discontinued. At Ironbridge, Shropshire, a portion of the Wesleyan chapel was wrecked, and the service had to be suspended. Stirchley Church was also seriously damaged.

The parishioners of St. Botolph have been much enraged because they are powerless to secure the appointment of the curate, the Rev. T. S. Henrey, as vicar. The right of appointment has been disposed of by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster to a speculator, and they have treated the claims of the parishioners with scant courtesy.

The Bible belief in witchcraft and possession by devils survives in Clonmel, co. Tipperary, Ireland. Michael Clery, a cooper, and a number of other men, stand charged with having caused the death of Clery's wife. It appears the poor woman was suffering from influenza, which her husband and others believed was the effect of being bewitched. To expel the evil spirit, she was forced to swallow a decoction obtained from a medicine-man, and then carried to a fire and held over it by the men until she was so terribly burnt that her death ensued.

From the *North Bay Times*, which is sent to us from Canada, we cut the following instance of the effects of over-much religion: "D. J. McLure, a highly-respected farmer, about three miles from Brampton, and his two brothers, have gone insane. They are in jail. It is thought to be a religious craze, for only recently they killed all their hogs and threw them away, believing the end of the world was near, and that food would not be required long."

A paper on "Ancient Chaldean Temples," in the *Echo* (March 25), says that in the early sacrificial code there is no mention of the sacrifice of animals, but only of such things as wine, fruit, bread, etc. In this respect it contrasts advantageously with the code of Jehovah, which was a system of wholesale slaughter. Judaism has been described as a religion of blood and thunder, in which the devotee offered the one for the fear of the other.

Lord Halifax, the President of the English Church Union, has been to Rome to confer with the Pope on the subject of Reunion. The E.C.U. boasts of 34,876 members, of whom 4,262 are clergymen. But these do not represent the English people, or even the Anglican Church, and their adherence to any scheme of union means precious little. What is noticeable is that, as the Church gets more Papistical, while the State and people remain Protestant, the time for the separation of Church and State palpably draws nearer.

The widow of Father Butler, D.D., Roman Catholic chaplain to the forces at Devonport, claimed his pension for herself and two sons. As she produced proofs of legal marriage, her claim was allowed. The *English Churchman* remarks: "We wonder are there many Roman Catholic priests in England who have imitated Father Butler's example."

One Christopher Jabarra, of Damascus, a gentleman who has visited England, has started at Cairo an Arabic weekly, entitled *Shahidatul Haq* (the Evidence of Truth), designed to unite Christians and Mohammedans on common ground. Commenting on this, the *Crescent* remarks that almost all the existing Christian creeds and Islam are as far apart as

the North and South Poles. The Unity of God is the central doctrine of Islam, while the Christians are Trinitarians. Islam teaches that every child born is innocent at its birth, though liable to err in after years; but Christianity teaches the innate depravity of the whole race at birth from "original sin." Islam teaches that faith and good deeds combined together merit salvation; while Christians believe all good actions to be "filthy rags," and that salvation can only be obtained through the vicarious atonement of Christ.

The *Crescent* concludes by asserting that Christianity and Islam can never become one until Christians recant their blasphemy upon the one and only God by giving him as partners in his inheritance "the man, Christ Jesus," and the mysterious "Holy Ghost."

People make the Bible teach anything they please. Here is Richard Nagel, M.D., saying in the *Vegetarian* (March 23): "Whilst in the Old Testament (the Jews' Bible) meat as food held dominion, the New Testament (the Bible of the Christian) teaches a non-flesh diet." To make out a case, he refers to the Essenes, who are not as much as mentioned in the New Testament, and omits all reference to Jesus taking fish, meat and lamb at Passover; or to his saying, in a vision to Peter, when all manner of animals were let down from heaven in a sheet, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat."

At the suggestion of the Bishop, Wednesday in Ember week was observed in the Truro district as a day for intercession for home missions. There was a special service in Truro Cathedral, when the Bishop himself preached. In the course of it he told how, on a recent visit to his university, he noticed a tutor returning the salute of various foreign undergraduates. He (the Bishop) asked, "Who are those?" and the answer was, "They are Chinese and Japanese and Indian gentlemen, who come to study and to take a degree here." "Are they clever?" he asked. "Yes," he said, "they are clever with our cleverest." He said, "Do they become Christians here?" "No," the tutor replied, and his voice was still sadly ringing in his (the Bishop's) ear; "No, they are less Christians when they leave than when they come. When they come, Christianity is with them an open question; it is shut for ever when they leave us, for they have seen the Christian life in England, and they say, 'God forbid that we should be Christians.'" Jesus is reported as saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Church buildings and sites, in London alone, are calculated to represent a monetary value of twenty millions. Yet all this property is not only untaxed, but is totally unavailable to the public, who pay for it, at any other time save on Sunday during the hours of "Divine service." Surely public churches should be open as places of rest at all hours, and public churchyards be universally turned into gardens or recreation grounds.

We regret to hear that Mr. J. M. Headley's shop, at 21 North Howard-street, Yarmouth, has been the scene of a destructive fire. Mr. Headley is a well-known purveyor of advanced literature, and a wag in the local *Independent* remarks that "the Socialist and Secularist literature, with which the shop was well stocked, was hot enough to cause spontaneous combustion." Mr. Headley informs us, however, that the fire really broke out in the part of the shop where he kept the Christian literature. He suggests that the hell-fire in that department caused the conflagration.

Christian meetings "for men only" are only too common, but the Rev. G. A. Wilson, of Fuel-lane Chapel, Sowerby Bridge, has hit upon the new idea of meetings "for women only." We are puzzled to understand, however, what claim he has to address such meetings. Sydney Smith said that there were three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. Mr. Wilson, perhaps, addresses the ladies as a member of the third sex.

The meeting "for women only" was held on Sunday afternoon. Mr. Wilson's address is not reported. Reporters are generally males, and they were excluded by the terms of the invitation. In the evening, however, when Mr. Wilson spoke to both sexes, he warned his hearers against "wolves in sheep's clothing," the chief of which, he said, was Agnosticism. Mr. Wilson appears to regard himself as a kind of sheep-dog. We hear his bark, but we have little dread of his bite.

Jesus Christ, by the way, did not include sceptics among the wolves in sheep's clothing. The parties he denounced were gentlemen who made long prayers and devoured widows' houses.

A few Sundays ago a clergyman in Ireland made the following announcement: "Next Sunday, in this church, the Rev. Mr. ——— will renounce the errors of Rome for those of Protestantism."



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, March 31, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London :— 7, "New Light on the Old Book."

April 7 and 14, Hall of Science; 17 and 18, debate at New Brompton with the Rev. A. J. Waldron (C.E.S.); 21, Glasgow.

May 8 and 9, debate at Derby with Mr. Lee (C.E.S.).

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

**MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.**—March 30, Blyth; 31, Newcastle-on-Tyne. April 7, Sheffield; 14, Liverpool; 21 and 28, Hall of Science, London. May 5, Glasgow; 12, Dundee.—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.

**QUIZ.**—A report of Mr. Conway's discourse on St. Patrick appeared in the *Echo* of March 18.

**A. MITCHELL.**—Shall appear. We are pleased to hear that you have gained us three new subscribers during the past month at Sheffield.

**VIXIT VERITAS.**—Sorry to hear the Reading Branch is so quiet. We quite believe there is plenty of good material for a strong society there. With respect to the other matter, you will perhaps read what we may have to say in our next issue.

**W. LAKE.**—Thanks for the reference, and for your expression of sympathy.

**G. CRUDDAS.**—The pamphlets you inquire about were destroyed in the fire at our premises some years ago.

**E. P. SCHOFIELD.**—The best edition of Mosheim is Murdock's translation, edited by Soames, in 4 vols. Maclaine's edition is untrustworthy; it is, indeed, a rhetorical paraphrase of Mosheim, who is nothing if not "judicious."

**W. MANLEY.**—Thanks for the remainder. The matter is attended to.

**T. RAMSDEN.**—See paragraph.

**T. WISE.**—(1) You misread our article. We did not say that Mr. Bradlaugh had never lectured on Freethought in Northampton, but only that he did not (and wisely) lecture on Freethought there while he represented the city in parliament. (2) Nor did we say that there were only three Freethought halls in this country. There are several besides those you mention. What we said was that there were only three Halls of Science. (3) Pleased to hear from such an old Freethinker as yourself.

**J. M. HEADLEY.**—Glad to hear that the *Freethinker* "sells like wildfire in Yarmouth."

**W. FINEDON.**—(1) Sorry to hear of your illness and other untoward circumstances. We believe the *Secular Hymn Book* published at Leicester is now out of print. You could learn for certain by applying to Mr. Holyoak, Bookstore, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester. (2) Mr. Foote has had too many worries of late to find time for literary work outside the *Freethinker*. He hopes to enjoy a little more freedom in the near future, and will then complete the *Bible Romances* and other writings on which he was engaged before the N.S.S. business made such terrible demands upon his time and energy. (3) The comic bill you enclose appeared in our columns many years ago. (4) We should like to see more *Secular* activity at Southampton. A visit from Mr. Foote would perhaps do some good. We wish a few friends there would see whether a decent hall is obtainable on a Sunday.

**C. E. SMITH.**—Mr. Wheeler has shown us your note. We intend to deal with the Professor Romanes matter shortly. The sketch you refer to has not been overlooked. We are waiting for an opportunity.

**G. N. WELD.**—Dr. Allinson was a duly-qualified medical practitioner, and is so still as a matter of fact, though not so according to the medical register. The doctors' trade-union, which has a legal charter, struck his name off the list because his heresies made other members uncomfortable. He fought the question on principle, and at great expense, though he was foredoomed to lose. You should read his essays, to which you make reference, before you pronounce a judgment.

**A. HITTIH** (Austria).—The Jews may be nefarious in your experience, but, after all, they are human, and largely what Christians have made them. In attacking their charter we seek to neutralise the danger of which you speak.

**WILLIAM BALCK**, 8 Celia-road, London, N., is very anxious to organise a *Secular Band*, which might be serviceable at Freethought gatherings in London. It is an excellent object, and we hope it will be successfully realised. Mr. Balck has heard from some Freethinkers, but he would like to hear from more. Correspondents should state what instrument they play.

**G. C. WALKER.**—Victor Hugo was not an Atheist; he might rather be described as a Pantheist.

**J. R. CARPENDALE**, 24 Dundas-street, Bradford, supplies this journal and all other *Secular* publications.

**F. BULL.**—Taylor's *Diegesis* would be of assistance. You can obtain it of Mr. Forder at 28 Stonecutter-street. Mr. Foote intends to develop his lecture on "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" into a good-sized pamphlet.

**C. DOEG.**—Mr. Roberts had sent us an amusing account of the matter. The clergyman who asked for a second copy of our "Atheist Shoemaker" pamphlet has probably ceased to be an admirer (except in the old sense of admiration) of Mr. Hughes.

**E. SMEDLEY.**—(1) Pleased to hear your friends were so delighted with Mr. Foote's lectures at Nottingham. (2) Mr. Foote will be happy to arrange for a publication of his debate with Mr. Lee. He has already written to that effect. (3) Members of the N.S.S. have a perfect right to sell books by authors whose opinions they dissent from. A Freethought bookseller would be considered a bigot if he would not sell the Bible. (4) We know nothing about the man Kesteren.

**PAPERS RECEIVED.**—The Faith—Two Worlds—Liberty—Open Court—Secular Thought—North Bay Times—Echo—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—Liberty—Illustrated Church News—Crescent—P. C. Supplement—Liberator—Truthseeker—Newcastle Chronicle—Nottingham Guardian—Boston Investigator—Daily News—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel.

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

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

**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.

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

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.

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:*—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

**THE HALL OF SCIENCE.**

UNDER this heading, I have first of all a word to say with respect to the late libel action. The defendants, Snow and Cook, against whom a verdict was obtained in the Court of Queen's Bench, appeared to think that the day of reckoning could be postponed until W. R. Bradlaugh had begged enough money to settle the bill. But in this they were mistaken. Messrs. Harper & Battcock, the solicitors for the plaintiff, after waiting longer than justice required, at length issued an execution against John Snow, and the whole of the damages and taxed costs, amounting to £150, was soon in the hands of the sheriff.

The action taken in this matter will probably damp the ardor of our calumniators. It appears to have struck consternation into the ranks of the more reckless missionaries of Christian Evidence. Some of these gentry report that I am asking for £300 to defray my own expenses. Of course I am doing nothing of the kind. I am sufficiently rewarded by the punishment of the malefactors.

The Club at the Hall of Science has ceased to exist. The committee handed over the keys to the Board of Directors on Monday. Whatever social element is introduced, under a possible re-organisation, will be entirely confined to members of the National Secular Society, and will be under the direct control of the Executive.

Some unpleasantness occurred before the Club gave up possession, which occasioned me a good deal of trouble. The committee, however, were not responsible for it; and I hope I shall be spared the necessity of referring to it again.

Mr. R. O. Smith has not favored me with any communication on the subject of my last week's announcement, but as I hear that he professes a willingness to bring the matter to a friendly settlement, I have had a meeting of the Board of Directors called for Thursday (March 28), at which he will have an opportunity of submitting an offer for consideration. On Sunday evening I lecture at the Hall of Science, after a considerable absence; and I shall make what will probably be an important announcement respecting the future of the institution. I invite the London members of our party to be present on this occasion.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

BLOW hurricanoes! Spout cataracts! cried old Lear out on that "blasted heath." The weather on that occasion must have been something like it was at Bristol on Sunday. A heavy storm raged for several hours, doing considerable damage in the city. Of course it had some effect, though not so great as was expected, upon Mr. Foote's morning and afternoon audiences. There was a capital audience in the evening, however; and a very respectable audience, too—not in the cant sense of the word. The lectures were all highly appreciated, and very warmly applauded. At the close of the day's proceedings a meeting of members and friends was held in the ante-room, and Mr. Foote talked over with them the condition and prospects of the Branch, with reference to a more vigorous propaganda in the immediate future.

Mr. Foote had the pleasure of speaking to several Freethinkers at Bristol who had been Christians before his debate with the Rev. J. M. Logan. That debate set them thinking, and thinking led to the usual conclusion. Those who see no use in public debates should ponder this fact. We can quite understand why Christians should regard discussion as unprofitable, but we cannot understand how any Freethinker can share that opinion.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (March 31) at the London Hall of Science, his subject being "New Light on the Old Book." Prior to the lecture Mr. Foote will have to make a very important announcement.

Mr. Charles Watts had an excellent audience at the Hall of Science, London, last Sunday evening. Mr. Rowney presided, and made a brief, but pleasant, speech. A short debate followed the lecture.

Mr. Watts lectures to-day, Sunday, March 31, morning and evening, in the Amphitheatre, Northumberland-road, Newcastle-on-Tyne. In the afternoon Mr. Watts will debate with Mr. M. Lynn, the official of the local Christian Evidence Society, upon the question, "Secularism: Is it an Adequate Philosophy for Mankind?" We are informed that Mr. Lynn is an able and gentlemanly opponent; our friends may therefore fairly expect a good debate. Mr. Watts will also lecture on Saturday night, March 30, at Blyth, his subject being, "The Bible in our Public Schools."

On another page our readers will find an announcement by Mr. Charles Watts with respect to Mr. Putnam's visit to England. We have not the pleasure of Mr. Putnam's personal acquaintance, though we look forward to it with much expectation; but we have no doubt that he is all Mr. Watts represents him to be, and we hope he will receive the warmest possible welcome from the Freethinkers of old England. Branches of the N.S.S. should communicate early with Mr. Watts in order to secure a visit from Mr. Putnam during his brief stay in this country.

Mr. C. Cohen concludes his six months' mission at South Shields on March 31, and will then be open for other engagements. He lectures at Newcastle during April. Circulars have been sent out by the Newcastle Branch for funds to carry on this month's mission with vigor and success. Friends who have received copies are invited to return them—with subscriptions or guarantees—to the Branch secretary as soon as possible. There may be other readers of the *Freethinker* in the district who would like to support this particular enterprise. Their donations will be very welcome, and will be expended judiciously.

Mr. Edward Truelove, the veteran Freethinker, is a little older than Mr. Gladstone, and still moves about with a freedom that might be envied by men who are ten years younger than himself. Mr. Truelove sends us a copy of the thirty-first edition of *The Elements of Social Science*, of which he has sold 79,000 copies since 1851; and with it he sends his best wishes for our health and happiness. It is the fashion of Christian apologists to talk as though the National Secular Society is somehow responsible for this book—which is a monstrous absurdity. There are opinions expressed in it, especially in regard to marriage, from which we strongly dissent; but the writer, whoever he is, writes with earnestness and sincerity as well as with knowledge and power, and his views must be attacked with the weapons of reason, not with denunciation and calumny.

The Nottingham Branch opens its new hall (situated at the corner of Woodland-place, Upper Parliament-street) to-day (March 31). The annual meeting will be held at 3.15 sharp. A tea will be provided (price 6d.) at 5, to which all members and friends are cordially invited. In the evening Mr. Hooper will lecture as announced. We hope there will be a good attendance.

The Battersea Branch holds its quarterly tea to-day (Sunday, March 31) at 5.30, followed by musical and dramatic entertainment and dancing. Strangers specially invited. Tickets are 6d. each, and can be obtained at the hall and at outdoor lecture. The general meeting for election of officers, etc., takes place on Thursday, April 4, at 8 sharp, when all members should attend. Those in arrears with their contribution should pay up at once, as the Branch requires funds for outdoor work.

George Macdonald, in his lively "Observations" in the *Truthseeker*, has the following: "Editor C. C. Moore sees things as through blue grass—darkly. Speaking in his paper, the *Blade*, of a book he wrote while (unjustly) in jail, he observes that, apart from *Eleta*, a law book, and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, his is the only book composed under similar circumstances. So Mr. Moore, though a professed exponent of Rationalism, has not heard of Thomas Paine in the Luxembourg prison writing Part I. of *The Age of Reason*; of Robert Taylor in Oakham jail producing his *Diagnosis and Synagma*; of George William Foote in Holloway 'goal' engaged on *A Prisoner for Blasphemy*; nor of D. M. Bennett in the Albany penitentiary devoting his leisure hours to a series of letters entitled *Behind the Bars*, and composing the two-volume octavo, *The Gods and Religions of Ancient and Modern Times*." Editor Moore's advocacy of Rationalism might be rendered more coherent by familiarity with its history. He should add knowledge to his understanding, and mingle thought with his literary labors."

Mr. Macdonald is under a slight misapprehension. Unlike Paine, Taylor, Carlile, and Bennett, Mr. Foote had no opportunities of writing in prison. *A Prisoner for Blasphemy* was written after he emerged from Holloway.

A Brahmin, writing in the *Forum* on "Christian Missions," says: "Let the aim of the missionary be to civilise and educate the savages and barbarians. To India send machinery instead of missionaries. Millions of people are kept back for want of education owing to intense poverty. Send good schoolmasters, mechanics, and scientists, and teach your practical arts to our people. This will cost you less than the missionaries."

F. M. Holland, writing in the *Open Court* on Byron, mentions the poet's irreligion. He says: "For him the Church was only a Niobe, weeping over her perishing titles. The main theme of 'Cain, a Mystery' is the difficulty of reconciling the sin and suffering in human life with the goodness of 'the prayer-exacting Lord.' The first draft of 'Childe Harold' denied the probability of immortality (see note on canto ii., stanza 8), and the poet's own philosophy, if he had any, may be detected in the speech ascribed to the demon in 'The Deformed Transformed':—

This is the consequence of giving matter  
The power of thought. It is a stubborn substance,  
And thinks chaotically, as it acts,  
Ever relapsing into its first elements.

Byron's irreligion was increased by indignation at the support of despotism everywhere in Europe by the clergy."

Mr. J. W. Beeton has a capital letter in the *Lynn News*, defending Mr. Robert Green, one of the local *Guardians*, who has been so vehemently denounced for lending a pauper a copy of the *Freethinker*. It is a well-written, outspoken letter, and should set some of the Lynn people thinking.

Another good letter on the "History of the Bible" appears in the *Kidderminster Times* from the pen of Mr. W. F. Griffiths, a local Secularist, who makes shoes and has time for thinking. Such letters in local newspapers must be beneficial to our movement.

Hudson Tuttle, one of the leading Spiritists in America, says in the *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago: "While Atheists are noted for upright lives, the most despicable criminals are superstitious believers in a personal God, and the most terrible crimes recorded in history have been committed in furtherance of God's worship."

The *Ironclad Age*, of Indianapolis, has entered on its fortieth year. This is a good age for a Freethought paper, and in this respect the *Ironclad Age* stands second only to the *Boston Investigator*. We congratulate Mrs. Monroe Power on the way in which she sustains her father's paper. *The Age* is always lively, though it does let the cranks meander somewhat freely through its pages.

To look for history in myths is like searching for solid ground while pursuing will-o'-the-wisps. One may stumble here and there on a firm footing, but swamps and fogs and darkness are what are met with for the most part.—*Dr. R. C. Maclagan, "Scottish Myths," p. 232.*

AN AMERICAN VISITOR.

I AM pleased to inform the readers of the *Freethinker* that next month Mr. S. P. Putnam, the popular Freethought lecturer and writer of America, will visit England. He will sail from New York on April 24, and he comes as President of all the nationally-organised Freethought Societies of the United States. I have known Mr. Putnam for many years, and I have always found him as genial in private as he is able in public. Next to Colonel Ingersoll, Mr. Putnam is the most eloquent speaker upon the American Freethought platform; while, as a poet and writer, he has won a high reputation on the other side of the Atlantic. His last work, *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*, which I have on sale for him, is a proof of his literary skill and industry. I should like him to have a good reception from the Secularists of this country.

Mr. Putnam will remain with us about three months, and during that time he wishes to lecture in all our principal towns. I have undertaken to arrange his lecturing tour, and shall be glad, therefore, to hear from friends throughout the country who are desirous of having the services of our American visitor. All applications for lectures from Mr. Putnam must be addressed to me at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE BIBLE: GRAND, IF HUMAN; ABSURD, IF DIVINE.

IF the English be in English saved or damned,  
And the Dutch be lost or sanctified in Dutch,  
It would seem—unless Jehovah's scheme is shammed—  
That with ancient tongues we needn't bother much.

Is it likely that Jehovah had inspired  
The original of what is called "His Word,"  
And neglected all its copies, nor desired  
That translators be inerrable? absurd!

But the Word's as full of errors as of spooks,  
Whence conflicting, inter-damning creeds arise;  
Hence, these parson-priest-and-god-degraded books  
Are but *human*, therefore *precious in our eyes*.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS.—VI.

JUDGE STRANGE.

THOMAS LUMSDEN STRANGE was one of the most earnest of the band of Freethinkers who gathered round Thomas Scott. He was an illustration that a good Christian makes a good Freethinker. When a young man, he experienced "conversion" and, belonging to the strictest sect of religionists, the Plymouth Brethren, it is almost a wonder that he ever got outside the wall of that exclusive body. But he was ever an earnest truthseeker, and his very earnestness brought him to the light. Educated as a barrister, he threw himself into evangelical work, and so set was his mind to religious subjects that in 1852 he published a work entitled *The Light of Prophecy: Being an Attempt to Trace out thereby the Coming of the Promised Glory*. Only last year there were published extracts from this work, entitled *Light on the Future*. The publisher says that some time ago his brother gave him the work, printed at the Wesleyan Mission Press, Bangalore, 1852, and adds: "I cannot find out who T. L. Strange was, or if he is at present alive; but I have little doubt he would be well pleased to find in England an echo of his wonderful work." The curious thing is that the publisher lives at Malvern, where Judge Strange resided during the latter period of his life. He also wrote *Observations on Mr. Elliott's "How Apocalyptic,"* in which he sought to refute the historical system of interpreting the Apocalypse. Mr. Strange was in the Indian Civil Service, and was animated by a desire to bring the natives to his own faith. He obtained a judgeship in the High Court at Madras, which he occupied about thirty years, and he published a *Manual of Hindoo Law*, Madras, 1856 and 1863. Among the natives of India he was bound to receive some impressions adverse to the exclusive claims of his own faith. He found a people essentially moral and religious, yet moved

by an ancient faith entirely different from his own. In the preface to his work on *The Sources and Development of Christianity* he says: "At one time my duties in India involved the charge of a jail and attendance at the execution of criminals. Trials calling for the sentence of death had to be referred to the superior court at Madras, for whose benefit the whole of the examinations had to be translated. There was always thus in these cases a considerable interval between the trial and the sentence and its execution. I was then a devout Christian, and used to take advantages of my opportunities to 'bring' the prisoners who were in these risks 'to Jesus.' They were ordinarily of the uneducated class; but one was otherwise, having been a servitor in a pagoda. He had professed himself influenced by what I had put before him; but when we met at the gallows he proclaimed his trust to be in Rama, and not in Christ. He died earnestly, calling upon his fancied mediator and savior." This set the judge thinking. He continues: "What are we to say to such a phenomenon? Rama's character is painted in the most exalted colors, and is described in a history considered to be an embodiment of divine truth. Rama was a god incarnate, devoting himself for the good of mankind. What is there to induce a follower of his to relinquish him for just such another form, presented to him from a foreign quarter? And do a man's eternal prospects depend upon his critical selection of the true history? Happily the means are ample for our extrication from any such dilemma, and, as I may acknowledge to have been the case in my own instance when I was involved in these meshes, it is simply ignorance of the true character of the materials before us, coupled with a vein of superstition, inherited, working round us, and cultivated in us from early youth, that forges those bonds in which mankind are held to the prevailing baseless expressions of belief."

The complete breakdown of Mr. Strange's faith occurred from reading, in an orthodox work, an attempt to reconcile the facts of paleontology with the Bible statement that death came into the world through the sin of Adam. Looking into the matter, he learnt that the earth's strata also contained evidences of man's existence for some immeasurable time before the period assigned to Adam. The fall of the first Adam necessarily shook the position attributed to the second Adam. He says, in his introduction to *Contributions to a Series of Controversial Writings issued by the Late Mr. Thomas Scott* (1881): "I proceeded to make as close and as full study as my opportunities gave me of the Biblical statements, and especially of the representations of Christ as a real personage; and, as I proceeded, every figuration broke down before me, and appeared even traceable to remote Oriental heathen sources." He closely examined the alleged evidences, and came to the conclusion that "there is a very decided gap between the occurrence of Christianity and the era asserted for the facts alleged as those on which the system has its foundations. It follows that the facts themselves, so bound in an historical expression of them at a particular period, cannot have been enacted, and that the creed has otherwise to be accounted for." Truth thus discovered, Judge Strange was not slow in communicating it to others. For Mr. Scott's series he wrote a number of tracts, afterwards collected as *Contributions to a Series of Controversial Writings*. This volume contains "How I Became, and Ceased to be, a Christian," "A Critical Catechism," "The Bennett Judgment," "Clerical Integrity," "Communion with God," "The Exercise of Prayer," "The Christian Evidence Society," "An Address to all Earnest Christians," "The Portraiture and Mission of Jesus," "The Christian Evidences," "The Pauline Epistles," "Scripture and Science," and "The Supreme Power in the Universe." His larger and more important works are *The Speaker's Commentary Reviewed*, a criticism of dishonest orthodox defences; *The Bible: Is it the Word of God?* a valuable and an extended examination of the fetish books in the form of a dialogue between a pundit and a student; *The Legends of the Old Testament*, in which their similarity to Hindu and other legends is pointed out; *The Sources and Development of Christianity*, in which he traces the era of Christianity, its constituents, its phases, the construction and integrity of the Christian records, and the Gentile moulds of Christianity; *The Development of Creation on the Earth*, in which the teachings of science are contrasted with those of Scripture; and *What is Christianity?* a historical sketch embellished with a chart illustrating the interval between the alleged time of Christ and that of the alleged evidence. His opposition was not only to the miracles and alleged facts of Christianity, but also to its principles. In regard to its central doctrine of atonement, he said: "It is impossible that the sin of one man can be imposed upon another. It is by a fiction, not to be realised by the mind, that the transference is to be. Can blood of any sort wipe away sin? Sin has to be repented of and turned from, and can be got rid of in no other manner." Judge Strange was a diligent student and writer, and ever an earnest advocate of practical piety in life and conduct. He died at Norwood on September 4, 1884, at the age of seventy-five. Major-General Forlong was appointed his literary executor.

J. M. WHEELER.

## THE MEANING OF ALL FOOLS' DAY.

A JEW—a real, live, wicked Jew—asked me yesterday the following innocent-looking question: "Why was the first day of the fourth month called April Fools' Day?" In the simplicity of my heart I imagined Abraham's descendant was thirsting for information, and I answered with all the glad fervor of one who hopes to add to a fellow-creature's stock of knowledge: "I have access to an encyclopædia; I will look up the subject, and let you know in a day or two." A wave of Hebraic hilarity dashed over the counters and shelves of the shop in which I stood, and intuitively I knew that the children of the circumcision were guying me, acting like the forty and two youths who made fun of a bald-headed old gentleman of ferocious proclivities; but I looked in vain for the two lady-bears to come to my rescue. Doubtless the ursine bearers of divine wrath were near by; but, as I did not by cursing invoke the merciful Jehovah's aid to avenge me of the Jews who were mocking me, the good little lady-bears went to bed supperless that eve. When the laughter at my expense subsided, I asked the Jew who had questioned me to answer his own conundrum.

Adjusting his toga with all the grace of a Roman orator, and inhaling with pardonable pride the aroma of admiration which floated from the eyes of his compatriots, my Jew thus delivered himself:—

"You Christians" (I did not like being called names, but I held my peace); "You Christians commemorate the 25th of December as the day upon which one-third of your God was born. You also assert that the mother of this fraction of a Deity was a holy virgin. A very large crowd of you profess to believe that this young lady of immaculate virtue, having been on somewhat intimate terms with another one-third of the Deity, possessed great influence over the mind of the one-third-in-chief of Deity, and every request made by her to this chief ever was and ever is granted. This is more or less the belief of you Christians. Now, let me tell you how we figure this thing out. Mary, *alias* Mrs. Joseph (Miriam the *lagshim*, as we call her), on the evening of March 31, nearly 2,000 years ago, compromised her character by a serious indiscretion. Fearful of consequences and to shield her good name, the prudent *virgin* gave out the next morning (April 1) that one-third of Deity, being a little less than kin, had been rather more than kind to her on the previous night. Many believed this absurd story; and Mary and her most intimate friends laughed at their folly, and among themselves called these credulous dupes April Fools. But some nine months later, towards the end of the year, when these believers came to do *poojee* (homage) to the 'Consequences,' the foresightful virgin-mother congratulated herself on having lied so sagely on the first day of the fourth month. Now you know why the gullible, who are ready to believe any cock-and-bull story told them, are, on a certain day, called April Fools." Another peal of mocking, Hebraic laughter was heard at the conclusion of the silly joke, and I walked away sore displeased.

WINNIPEG.

—*Secular Thought.*

A gentleman was conversing with an Idaho minister whom he happened to meet on a railroad train. "You have been preaching in the West for several years?" he inquired. "Yes, for the last twenty years," replied the minister. "You know," continued the Eastern man, "how we sometimes read of ministers in your country frequently having to go into the pulpit with a revolver to use in maintaining order in a turbulent congregation. Is there anything in it?" "Oh, yes, I have known ministers to do it, but I consider it entirely unnecessary." "That was always my idea, too." "Oh, yes; yes, altogether unnecessary," returned the preacher. "Besides, it always seemed to me in very poor taste for a minister of the Gospel, preaching peace on earth and goodwill towards men, to go around tied to a hip cannon. Yes, a gun is wholly uncalled for," continued the good man, as he took the roll of sermons in his left hand and reached down with his right and extracted a 14 in. knife from his boot-leg; "yes, wholly uncalled for. Give me this bowie in my boot-leg and a good pair of brass knuckles and a hymn-book in my coat-tail pocket, and I will agree to carry the Gospel to any man that ever looked through a collar. The shooting-iron has had its day as a method of evangelisation."

## A FEW QUESTIONS FOR THE GOSPEL TWISTERS.

SAY, if 'twas truly God's design  
To keep men ignorant as swine,  
Not knowing good from evil,  
Why didn't he just harm that tree  
With spines as thick as bristles,  
Then hedge it round upon the ground  
With cactus and bull-thistles?

Why plant that murderous tree at all,  
So dangerous to the health of all,  
And to himself so galling?  
And then, why give that fierce command  
He knew they could not understand,  
With all its mystic meanings, and  
So sure to cause their falling?

And what about the serpent wise—  
Was he a god in that disguise,  
Or devil in a snake's skin,  
Who dared dispute that threat of dying,  
And charge his God with wilful lying,  
And every word he said denying—  
Was it a scheme to make sin?

Why did not God that serpent choke,  
Or was it but a funny joke?  
'Twould seem so in our version.  
When neither right nor wrong they knew,  
He wished to see what they would do,  
And test his handiwork when new,  
All for his own diversion.

If God in justice judges sin,  
Why did he not at once begin  
With his first pets in error;  
First stand that serpent on his head,  
His tail tied to a limb till dead,  
For telling truth, must it be said,  
A monument of terror;

Then call his children to his knee,  
And give them both a pardon free?  
It seems so very odd like,  
When right from wrong they could not tell,  
How was it that they could rebel,  
And was it right to give them hell  
For trying to be God-like?

S. M. BAYARD.

## Daniel Isaac Eaton in the Pillory.

We recently referred to the punishment of Eaton in the pillory for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*, a punishment which evoked Shelley's splendid *Letter to Lord Ellenborough*. In Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, under the date May 26, 1812, is the following: "Walked to the Old Bailey to see D. I. Eaton in the pillory. As I expected, his punishment of shame was his glory. The mob was not numerous, but decidedly friendly to him. His having published Paine's *Age of Reason* was not an intelligible offence to them. I heard such exclamations as the following: 'Pillory a man for publishing a book, shame!' 'Religious liberty!' 'Liberty of conscience!' Some avowed their willingness to stand in the pillory for a dollar. 'This a punishment? this is no disgrace!' As his position changed, and fresh partisans were blessed by a sight of his round, grinning face, shouts of 'Bravo!' arose from a new quarter. His trial was sold on the spot. The whole affair was an additional proof of the folly of the ministers, who ought to have known that such an exhibition would be a triumph of the cause they meant to render infamous."

## Obituary.

It is with sincere regret that I announce the death of Mary, the beloved wife of John Hume, of Willington, at the age of fifty-two, having been an invalid for a great number of years. She was laid in her last resting place at Willington Cemetery, March 20, 1895. As Mr. Hume is a Freethinker of a noble type, and greatly respected by all who have the pleasure of knowing him, it was his desire to have a Secular Burial Service over his lamented wife, which was ably and impressively conducted by our friend, Michael Stitt, of Crook. Many persons, having for the first time heard our Service, were greatly pleased by the beauty of expression it contained.—J. C.

The destroyers of the old are the creators of the new. As time sweeps on the old passes away, and the new in its turn becomes old.—*Inyersoll.*

BOOK CHAT.

THE reminiscences of the late well-known scientist and Freethinker, Jacob Moleschott, have been published by Emil Roth, of Giessen. The book is entitled *Für meine Freunde* (For my Friends), and concerns itself rather with his early life in Holland and Germany than with his later days in Italy. It gives interesting particulars of many noteworthy men, including Humboldt, Feuerbach, Gervinus, Strauss, Georg Forster, and Renan.

We have received some *Truth Seeker* pamphlets, which are issued under the auspices of the editor of the monthly bearing that name. One is on "Secularism," and is from the pen of the editor himself. Mr. Grange writes with force and ability, and his pamphlet deserves a wide circulation. Mr. C. Cohen writes on "The Decay of Belief." His pamphlet is full of good matter, presented with interest and perspicuity. Mr. Sam Standing chooses the curious title of "Christ and Ally Sloper." Each pamphlet has a recognisable portrait of the author. The price is one penny.

M. Tarde, who is already favorably known by his works on Criminology and Sociology, has issued, through Messrs. Alcan, a new work on *La Logique Sociale*. M. Tarde connects sociology with psychology, comparing society to the brain. He finds in the laws of imitation and invention, which, after all, are much like the biological laws of inheritance and variation, the threads of social logic.

*Homœopathy: All About It*, by John H. Clarke, M.D. (Homœopathic Publishing Co.), gives in short compass a number of arguments in favor of this treatment. Without entering into controversial matter, we can well believe that any treatment that minimises the action of drugs is likely often to be beneficial.

The third edition of Professor Geikie's *Great Ice Age* has just been issued. He does not give in to Sir William Dawson's labored attempt to reduce the antiquity of man, but contends that he lived in the interglacial epoch, and that there is a wide gap between palæolithic and neolithic man.

A biography of the late Rev. Dr. Crosskey, by the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A., will shortly be issued from Birmingham by Messrs. Cornish Brothers. Dr. Crosskey was a leading light among the Unitarians, and altogether a liberalising influence in Birmingham.

*The Path I Took, and Where it Led Me*, is an autobiography by a Monmouthshire farmer, who, it appears, is now over eighty years of age. Mr. G. J. Holyoake has revised the manuscript, which gives some interesting particulars of religious life in the early part of the century. The author, fully convinced of the unsuitability of the clergy as moral guides, exhorts his fellows to examine all they are taught by the light of reason.

Sir Arthur Helps once wrote a very able novel, entitled *Realmah*, in which he sought to depict primitive man. M. Armand Charpentier has gone a step farther, and in *Le Roman d'un Singe* describes the emotions of an anthropoid ape who is almost a man.

Mr. R. Bruce Boswell, in his interesting *Footprints of the Devil in Our Own Country* (which is not a religious production), shows the connection between the Devil and the old Pagan deities. Among places associated with the Devil in the British Isles he mentions the Devil's Island, which frowns over Muckcross Lake, Killarney; a Devil's Glen in Wicklow, as well as in Wales; the Devil's Point at Plymouth; the Devil's Water, a tributary of the Tyne, near Hexham; the Cave of Devils at Little Orme's Head; the Devil's Pit, at Cadgewith, Cornwall; a Devil's Hole in Jersey, and another near Lough Erne, in Ireland. On Marlborough Downs there is a dolmen or cromlech known as the Devil's Den; and at Castleton, in Derbyshire, is a cavern called the Devil's Cellar. To find the Devil's Kitchen we must go to Llyn Idwal, in North Wales; to mount his Staircase one must visit Glencoe; and his Chimney is within an easy walk of Cheltenham.

A second and enlarged edition of *Speeches by Charles Bradlaugh* has just been published by A. & H. Bradlaugh Bonner (63 Fleet-street). The added matter includes a fine address on the Irish question, delivered at New York in 1873. Mr. J. M. Robertson has enriched the volume with some very useful annotations. The price is five shillings, and the book should have a place in the library of every Freethinker and Radical who can spare the money to purchase it.

We ought not to close without a word of praise for the remarkably fine portrait which serves as frontispiece.

\* \* \*

The posthumous works of the late Dr. Norman Pearson, author of *National Life and Character*, are being collected by Professor H. A. Strong. They consist of numerous essays on political and social subjects, and of poetry.

WHERE RIDICULE COMES IN.

You ask me why I ridicule the "holy name of God." But what does "holy" mean, my friend, and who in heaven is God? And where is heaven? and where is hell? and are they very far? Until you answer me these things I "dunno where you are."

You say I ought to speak with awe on what the crowd believe; That is, that I should "look respect" while laughing up my sleeve At all the little legends which through age have won repute. Why, really, friend, you'd have me act to earn a taste of boot.

You tell me that I ought to speak with awe and bated breath About the Eden story and the origin of death, And of the curse of sorrow which on mankind had been wrought, While many men had lived and died in ages more remote.

You surely would not have me bolt the fairy Babel tale, Nor that which tells how Jonah found a lodging in a whale, Nor that of how Cap. Joshua made sun and moon stand still, Nor yet that one where Moses struck a rock and struck a rill.

They all are fairy stories, and tho' millions may be gulled Into belief that they are true, withal my doubt's unulled, For numbers of believers do not make a tale more true; The tales are still ridiculous, whate'er they seem to you.

You never catch me laughing at the sayings pure and sage Which shine like gems among the trash upon the sacred page Of Bible or of Vedic hymn, of Sûtra or Shih-King; But when it comes to rubbish—why, I'll laugh like anything.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

PROFANE JOKES.

Sunday-school Teacher—"What is faith?" First Pupil—"Faith is believing in the superintendent's stories." Second Pupil—"Believing what you know isn't true."

Grandpa—"Well, Willie, you have been to church, haven't you?" Willie—"Yes, sir." "Well, what can you tell us about it?" Willie—"Why, sir, the man that sat in front of us had ears that wasn't alike."

Minister—"So you say that you saw some boys out fishing Sunday, Bobbie? I hope you did something to discourage them." Bobbie—"Oh, yes, sir. I stole their bait."

"Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;  
If this were not a folding-bed,  
I'd take all risks myself," she said.

Aunt (poetically)—"Ah, what is more beautiful, more sublime, than the tolling of the church bells upon a Sabbath morning! What happy thoughts it brings us!" Nephew (practical)—"You bet it does, aunt! Just as soon as a fellow hears them he knows that it's Sunday, and he can turn over and sleep all day if he wants to."

Parson Whangdoodle Baxter, of the Thompson-street Blue Light Tabernacle, on arriving at his place of worship one Sunday morning, was surprised to find no one present but Sam Johnsing, the sexton. "What de debbil am de matter dat dar's nobody heah?" "Nobody heah becase dar's a notice in the *Freeman's Journal* dat dar would be no sarvice becase ob de disunwellness ob de pasture." "Did dat fool niggah editor put dat notice in his paper for a fac'?" "He did dat berry ting." "Wall, I declar'. I told him 'stinetly de notice of my disunwellness was intended for de Sunday arter nex'."

## 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.): 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "New Light on the Old Book." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 5.30, tea, entertainment, and dance. (Tickets 6d.) Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, members' quarterly meeting.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. B. Coppock, F.O.S., "The End of the Universe"—with lantern illustrations.

ISLINGTON (Liberal and Radical Association Committee Rooms, Upper-street, near the Vestry Hall): Thursday, at 8.30, F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist, and Why I Remain One." (Free.)

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, George Bernard Shaw, "Great Men—Are they Real?" (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Leslie Stephen, "The Vanity of Philosophising."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH (Mr. Stace's, 42 Vincent-street): 8, members' monthly meeting.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 6.15, discussion—"Self-Determinism"; 7.30, G. Carter, "The Unemployed Problem."

WOOD GREEN (Secretary's house, 71 Gladstone-avenue): 7, members' meeting.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why Did Christ Die?"

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, a lecture; 3.30, a lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. R. Thompson will lecture.

## COUNTRY.

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

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Ellis, "Local Rome and its Remains."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, F. J. Boorman, "Is Jesus a Fact or Fable?"

FAIRFORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Sam Standring, "Great is Diana!"

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

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Monro, "The Ten Commandments."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Hill, "Eccentricities of the Law."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Wainscott, "The Labor Problem—A Reply to *Merric England*." (Free.)

NOTTINGHAM (Woodland Hall, Woodland-place, N. Parliament-street): 3, annual meeting; 5, tea (6d. each); 7, James Hooper, "Moses, Huxley, and Tyndall."

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 3, A. B. Wakefield, "John Morley; A Study"; 6.30, "Secularism: Is it Successful?" For place, see *Observer*.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): a celebrated local Professor of Magic, etc., lectures, with practical illustrations.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "The Ethics of Evolution"; 7, "Scepticism, its Influence and Value."

SUNDERLAND (Co-operative Hall, Green-street): 3, C. Cohen, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?"

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "War."

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 7, 14, 21, 28, Newcastle-on-Tyne. May 2, Wood Green; 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 23, Wood Green; 26, m. Insbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—March 31, a. and e. Tottenham. April 7, m. and e. Wood Green; 14, m. Pimlico Pier, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 14, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Camberwell. May 5, a. Fitzjerry Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, Olerkenwell.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—March 31, Failsworth.

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From the "Bradford Weekly Telegraph," Saturday, February 16, 1895.

GREAT FIRE IN BRADFORD.

EXTENSIVE DAMAGE.

Early on Saturday a big fire took place in the warehouse, No. 2 Union-street, Bradford, occupied by Mr. R. Higgins, who occupies a large part of the ground floor, and numbers the following tenants occupying the other offices and rooms: Mr. Ernest Hahnel, Messrs. Schmidt & Co., Mr. J. W. Gott, Messrs. G. D. Wright & Co., and Mr. J. Pepper. The damage done is very extensive, and is roughly estimated at a figure between £8,000 to £10,000. It certainly cannot be less than £8,000, as many of the firms occupying the building had large and valuable stocks stored in the various rooms. Mr. R. Higgins had a big stock of woollens, stuffs and yarns, and estimates his loss at over £4,000. He is insured up to £4,000. Messrs. Wright & Co., stuff merchants, have had fully £1,000 damage done to their stock and premises, but it is completely covered by insurance. Mr. J. W. Gott, cloth and stuff merchant, had a stock valued at £1,500, and it is partially destroyed, chiefly by water. The other firms, with the exception of Mr. J. Pepper, have suffered in like manner, a lot of stock being destroyed by water. The cause of the fire is unknown, but, judging by appearances, it broke out in the packing-room of Mr. R. Higgins.

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