

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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HARCOURT'S TUMBLE.

SIR WILLIAM VERNON HARCOURT was never an object of my admiration. Those who regard him as a great statesman are welcome to their belief. At any rate, it is not a theme for discussion in the *Freethinker*. Facts, however, are stubborn things. If you go away and come back you generally find they have been waiting for you. And it is a fact that Sir William Harcourt has had a very bad fall. After representing Derby for half a generation he has been rejected by a tremendous majority. His seat was considered perfectly safe, but he has lost it, some fifteen hundred of his supporters having deserted him and voted for the Tories.

In considering this event from a Freethought point of view, I must refer to something which occurred twelve years ago. I was then a compulsory recipient of Her Majesty's hospitality in Holloway Gaol. For attempting to "bring the Holy Bible and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt" I was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment like a common thief. I was dressed in prison garb, fed on prison fare, locked up in a brick vault twelve feet by six, denied all access to my friends except at rare intervals, refused all writing materials except a slate and pencil, and for a time only allowed one book to read—which, by a poignant irony, was the very volume I had fallen among thieves for studying too attentively. A man never forgets his experiences in such a situation. For ten years I have lived within sight of the tower of Holloway Gaol, and every time my gaze falls upon it, I am reminded (if I am ever likely to forget it!) that my great business in life is to attack the evil superstition which has always waged relentless war against the rights of Freethought.

I was tried for the fictitious crime of "blasphemy" at the Old Bailey. The judge who presided was a Roman Catholic. He was also a superlative bigot. One jury disagreed, much to his lordship's disgust. He then refused me bail, and I was locked up in Newgate. Another jury—obviously a packed one—was empanelled to try my case alone. I was found guilty, and sentenced to the utmost penalty the law permitted. I expected this, and I told Judge North that the sentence was worthy of his creed. Fortunately I couched my disgust in ironical language, or I might have had another six months for contempt of court.

A prisoner tried at the Old Bailey is like a rat in a hole. I was therefore not sorry to be tried again, on another indictment, in the Court of Queen's Bench, before the late Lord Coleridge. On that occasion I made a speech which was reported in the newspapers, and which attracted considerable attention. One point, at least, was clear gain. Christians had talked of my "indecent" attacks on Christianity, and, in addressing the jury, I complained of the use of this misleading word. Lord Coleridge, like a true gentleman, assisted me in this direction. He told the jury that there was no "indecent," in the proper sense of

the word, in my alleged "blasphemy." "He may be blasphemous," said Lord Coleridge, "but he certainly is not licentious, and you do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind."

A petition for my release was signed by the foremost men in science, art, and literature. It was absolutely unique. But it made no impression on Sir William Harcourt, who was then Home Secretary. He would not even allow the slightest relaxation in my prison treatment. The "indulgences," such as they were, which I subsequently enjoyed, were granted by the Prison Commissioners in consequence of Lord Coleridge's representations. As the petition had no effect, a question was asked in the House of Commons by Mr. Labouchere. That was Sir William Harcourt's opportunity, and he took it like a Christian. In the face of Lord Coleridge's strong, clear words about my alleged "indecent," the Home Secretary replied that he could not see his way to remit the sentence of a prisoner who had been found guilty of "an *obscene* libel." In vain I asked him to liberate me on the charge of "blasphemy" and try me again on the charge of "obscenity." In vain the *Radical* papers protested against the Home Secretary's statement as an outrage. Sir William Harcourt knew I could not prosecute him for libel, as the House of Commons is a privileged place, where a man can indulge in lies and defamation with impunity. He also knew that he was pleasing Mr. Gladstone. He likewise knew that he was pleasing the great bulk of the religionists of this country. He played a mean, cowardly, contemptible part, which would have been nauseous to any man with a spark of magnanimity. And he did it to please the Christians.

Years have rolled by, and now the Christians have shown their gratitude. Sir William Harcourt has been kicked out of Derby by a coalition of Beer and Bible. Alderman Bemrose occupies his seat; and who is Alderman Bemrose? "He is pre-eminently a Christian," says a writer in the *Daily News*, "and he places that before all other considerations." I understand he is president of the Young Men's Christian Association. And this eminently pious man, this representative Christian, has sent Sir William Harcourt packing. He is knocked down, so to speak, by the very Bible party, in whose interest he slandered me so vilely. It is really refreshing. One rubs his hands, and feels that poetic justice has not forsaken the earth.

"Politics," says one of George Meredith's characters—"politics is climbing the greasy pole; mutton or no mutton, there's grease for certain." Sir William Harcourt has had the mutton; he has also had the grease. He is a member of the Church of England, yet he supports Disestablishment, at least where it is demanded by Liberals. He is a drinker—we do not mean a drunkard—yet he takes up the cause of Teetotalism. Anything to reach the mutton at the end of the pole.

Mr. Gladstone "took on" the Nonconformist Conscience, but he was a pawky old parliamentary hand, and knew

how to use the Dissenters. Only on one occasion did he succumb himself. It was when he slapped Parnell in the face, and destroyed the prospects of Home Rule. Sir William Harcourt "took on" the Nonconformist Conscience after his chief's retirement, and it has sunk him fathoms deep in the ocean of failure. Temperance is an admirable thing. We love it as much as anyone. No man who does a lot of work can be other than temperate. But you cannot promote Temperance in opposition to human nature. People who are not teetotallers—and they are the majority—will never submit to fanatics who want to make it illegal, or difficult, to drink a glass of beer. Men who see that the liquor traffic must be regulated, cannot see why a "prohibition" clause should be inserted in a public bill. And they are apt to feel disgust when they learn that the author of the clause is not a teetotaller. Rich men, with well-stocked wine-cellars, are hypocrites to be so anxious about the poor man's sobriety. They are always legislating for *him*, but how their hands and eyes go up when he proposes to legislate for *them*!

I do not wish Sir William Harcourt any harm. But I am not sorry for what *has* occurred. He will obtain another seat, and I presume he will lead the broken army of Liberalism in the new Parliament. My desire is simply to emphasise what looks like a piece of retribution. He pandered to Christian bigotry, and he has fallen a victim to pious opponents. He flattered the Nonconformist Conscience, although he is himself a Churchman, and he has lost the sweets of office in consequence. He has now an opportunity for reflection, and I will see that he has a copy of this article to help him. G. W. FOOTE.

NAPOLEON'S RELIGION.

"In spite of terrors of Napoleon, he is entitled to the gratitude of mankind. He pulled down the Pope, and the monks in Spain and Italy, and the Inquisition in those countries. He carried the light of liberal principles to dark and enslaved regions. It will be impossible for all the kings and priests in the world to make men as ignorant and submissive as they were before he marched over the Alps.....Napoleon—and that was his greatest fault—gave, in some sort, a sanction to falsehood, and hypocrisy, and imposture, by going to mass. His example was of evil tendency. The act was, besides, a compromise with fraud."—*Wm. Cobbett, "Register," vol. xxviii., p. 6.*

THE time should be approaching when both Frenchmen and Englishmen will take an impartial view of the great personality who, a century ago, was rapidly rising to power in Europe. The harsh judgments of historians like Scott and Lanfrey may perhaps be somewhat modified by the conviction that Napoleon, like lesser men, often acted from necessity rather than from will. Lust of power grows by what it feeds on. The fabric of Napoleon's dominion ever needed new conquests to make the earlier ones secure. If ever a man could dominate circumstances, and, by seizing the opportune moment, subordinate them to his purposes, it was Napoleon. Yet Napoleon believed in destiny, and would have said with Bismarck: "There is so much *I must* in my life that I rarely reach *I will*." He said himself: "My son cannot replace me; I could not replace myself. I am the creature of circumstances."

Napoleon came at the break-up of the old feudalism, and completed the work. France was fighting for very life against the allied monarchies of Europe, and he won his way to the top by dint of his inherent fighting qualities. Physically, he was different from other men. His head was abnormally large, his blood circulated abnormally slow. In this respect, such a man was never known. His pulse beat only forty to the minute. This indicated great reserves of energy and callousness. He could easily stand work, troubles, and sleeplessness that would have killed other men. His habit was to get to bed at eleven and be up at three, and he had the "two o'clock in the morning courage." In war he could do everything for himself. "*Il n'est rien à la guerre, que je ne puisse faire par moi-même.*" He said with the same frankness: "*J'aime le pouvoir comme un musicien aime son violon*" (I love power as a musician his violin). He went straight to his point unembarrassed by scruples.

Rarely has the "Will for Power" been more absolutely incarnate or more reckless of honor, truth, sympathy, affection, or human life. He said to Metternich he thought

nothing of the lives of a million men.* As a matter of fact, between 1804 and 1815 there were killed more than 1,700,000 Frenchmen, not to mention allies and enemies. The eternal Ego may be said to have been at bottom of his religion. On his beautiful bronze face was stamped, as Heine remarked, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Woe to those who stood in his way!

Yet he believed in Fate, which he identified with God. He was a Deist of the school of Voltaire, thinking with him, "*Si Dieu n'existait pas il faudrait l'inventer*" (If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him)—exactly what has been done. He had a genuine belief in an overruling Power, but he was consistent throughout. He regarded religion as an instrument of policy, and utilised it to render others subservient to himself. Atheism he was suspicious of. Those who deny celestial rule are apt to question terrestrial rulers boldly. To Laplace he noticed that his great work *La Mécanique Céleste* never once mentioned the name of God. "Sire," replied the astronomer, "*je n'ai pas eu besoin de recourir à cette hypothèse.*" Laplace had no need to recur to that hypothesis, but Napoleon had. He had a strong sense of the mystery of existence, and he knew that God was among the magical words, as he called *liberté* and *égalité*; excellent to conjure with.† His God or Fate was an unknown one. He said, "The problems of Providence are insoluble." "All predictions are imposture, the result of fraud, folly, or fanaticism." Yet he would have repudiated Positivism had it been started in his time. "A religion," he remarked, "which relates to this life, without teaching man whence he comes and whither he goes, is not supportable (*soutenable*)."

Napoleon did not believe in any special revelation. He said: "I once had faith. But when I came to know something, as soon as I began to reason, which occurred early in life, at the age of thirteen, I found my faith attacked and that it staggered." He became, as he said, "no capuchin," but a man of the world, ready to utilise it for his own aggrandisement. Of the Christian religion, he said: "As far as I am concerned, I do not see in it the mystery of the Incarnation, but the mystery of social order, the association of religion with paradise, an idea of equality which keeps the rich from being massacred by the poor." Again he says: "Society could not exist without an inequality of fortunes, or an inequality of fortunes without religion." "A man dying of starvation alongside of one who is surfeited, would not yield to this difference, unless he had some authority which assured him that God so orders it, that there must be both poor and rich in the world, but that, in the future, and throughout eternity, the portion of each will be changed." Christianity was not true, but it was useful. He said frankly to his friends: "It is said that I am a Papist. I am nothing. In Egypt I was a Mussulman; here I shall be a Catholic, for the good of the people. I do not believe in religions; but the idea of a God! [Then pointing upward] Who made all that?" (Thibaudeau, p. 152).

His sentiments were the same when at St. Helena. Mrs. Abell, in her *Recollections of the Emperor Napoleon* (p. 69), relates how she catechised him on the subject in Anglo-French. "*Pourquoi avez-vous tourné Turque?*" He did not at first understand me, and I was obliged to explain that "*ourné Turque*" meant changing his religion. He laughed and said, "What is that to you? Fighting is a soldier's religion; I never changed that. The other is the affair of women and priests; *quant à moi*, I always adopt the religion of the country I am in." He was much annoyed when accused of Atheism, though he confessed himself a fatalist, saying, "I believe that whatever a man's destiny calls upon him to do, that he must fulfil." His belief in destiny was doubtless genuine, though it, too, had its utility in impressing others with the idea that he was the man destined to rule, and that the stars in their courses fought for Napoleon. J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

* "*Un homme comme moi se f... de la vie d'un million d'hommes.*" Napoleon's heartlessness is much dilated upon by Professor Sloane in this month's *Century*; yet it is strange that he relies chiefly on his merciful suggestion to the surgeons that his plague-stricken veterans, who were to be left behind in Egypt, be poisoned by an overdose of opium.

† He shrewdly observed that liberty was the need of the choice few, by nature elevated above the rest. It may be repressed with impunity, but equality, on the contrary, is the craving of the multitude.

CROMWELL THE FRIEND OF FREEDOM.

(Concluded from page 436.)

THERE is no principle in Secularism that commends itself with greater force to all truly liberal minds than that of toleration, or, as I prefer to put it, a just consideration for the mental rights of those from whom we differ. As uniformity of opinion upon speculative subjects is impossible, all persons should be permitted, without impediment or persecution, to entertain whatever views upon such questions which may accord with their individual judgment. Cromwell undoubtedly entertained this view, for he proved himself a real friend of toleration, and that at a time when it was regarded by politicians as folly, and by divines as criminal. The Presbyterians of his day were as intolerant as the Roman Catholics, and Goldwin Smith says these very "Presbyterians who persecuted Cromwell with the most unrelenting malignity, were never persecuted by him." In reply to those who urged the justice of toleration, the Assembly of Divines at Westminster in 1644 pronounced it to be "the grand work of the Devil," and that it "had all error and all evil in it." A similar spirit of intolerance actuated the minds of most of the members of the numerous Christian sects with whom Cromwell had to deal. They appeared to revel in persecuting, and in inflicting the severest tortures upon each other. The Christian method of dealing with religious opponents was to whip them, imprison them, and place them in the pillory, to bore their tongues through with a hot iron, and have the letter B (for blasphemer) branded on their forehead. These were the humane and Christian modes of encouraging "religious freedom" when Secularism was unknown, and when the followers of Christ held absolute sway. To the credit of humanity, be it said, that in all ages, and among all faiths, there have appeared some natures too pure and too noble to be entirely corrupted by their theology. Among these, in the history of the past, is the name of Cromwell, the friend of freedom.

Cromwell was too great a lover of liberty to allow his faith in God to interfere with his duty to man. Goldwin Smith says: "Theoretically, of course, his toleration embraced only Protestants and Trinitarians, all sects of whom he desired to see, not only at peace with each other, but united. . . . But the greatness of his nature carried him beyond his theory, and in all cases we find him practically the enemy of superstition." It is only just to observe here that Cromwell was himself superstitious, particularly upon the eve of his death. But this weakness upon his part did not destroy his practical love of toleration. Hence we find that he protected from Christian violence Biddle, the father of English Unitarians; he pleaded for the safety of the enthusiast, James Nayler, who roamed the country as "the Everlasting Son, the Prince of Peace, the Fairest among Ten Thousand"; he made determined efforts to obtain the readmission of the Jews to England, whence they had been banished since the year 1290; and when George Fox, the Quaker, was imprisoned and threatened with death for preaching, he was brought to Cromwell, who set him at liberty upon his promise that he would not take up arms against the Government. It is quite true that Cromwell issued some strict ordinances against both Catholics and the Anglicans, but it was not on account of their religious opinions, but in consequence of their political plots and insurrections. According to Baxter, Cromwell's maxim was: "The magistrate had only to do with civil things, not with a man's religion when held as a private view."

Equally liberal and considerate was Cromwell in political matters. In a letter to Major Crawford, he states the rule that should be observed in the selection of servants of the State. He writes: "Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing to serve it, that satisfies." His treatment of political opponents was not revengful; he only desired to prevent them from injuring the Government of the country. If they persisted in trying to thwart his power, he had them simply confined until they were convinced of what he deemed "the error of their ways." Much severer treatment has been dealt out since his time to those who opposed "the powers that be." Surrounded, as Cromwell was, by determined and sometimes not over scrupulous

enemies, he was compelled to do something to check their persistent machinations, or all progressive legislation would have been impossible. Ormond, a most formidable enemy of Cromwell, came to London disguised for the purpose of getting up a plot against the Government. He was discovered before he could carry out his design, upon which Cromwell said to a friend of Ormond's: "If you wish to do a kindness to an old friend, Ormond is in London; warn him to be gone." This was the action of a noble mind, not the spite of a revengful spirit. No wonder that Algernon Sidney told Burnet "that the Protector had just notions of public liberty."

To those who question Cromwell's ability to advance the civil business of the nation, I would remind them of his words in calling attention to the abuses which then existed in connection with the law: "There is one general grievance in the nation. It is the law. I think I may say it, I have as eminent judges in this land as have been had, or that the nation has had for these many years. Truly I could be particular as to the executive part, to the administration; but that would trouble you. But the truth of it is, there are wicked and abnormal laws that will be in your power to alter. To hang a man for stealing sixpence, threepence, I know not what—to hang for a trifle, and pardon murder, is in the ministration of the law through the ill-framing of it. I have known to my experience abominable murder quitted, and to see men lose their lives for petty matters. This is a thing God will reckon for; and I wish it may not be upon this nation a day longer than you have an opportunity to give a remedy; and I hope I shall cheerfully join with you in it." From the standpoint of justice, can these sentiments be surpassed in the bold speeches of Cæsar, Bonaparte, or Washington, with whom Cromwell has been compared? To his honor, be it said, that he insisted upon trial by jury and the establishment of a high court of justice, where the legal rules of evidence were observed. "Nor," says Goldwin Smith, "unless to murder the Protector and overturn the Government was no offence, does the slightest suspicion rest upon it of having shed one drop of innocent blood."

I have no space here to deal adequately with what is supposed to be the three blots on the character of Cromwell—namely, his excluding members from the House of Commons in 1654, the execution of the king, and the Irish massacres. These acts can only be understood by remembering the circumstances of the time. Probably had he not have interfered with the members of Parliament, the conspiracies that were then being concocted against him would have culminated in destroying the commonwealth, if not Cromwell's life. I am opposed to capital punishment, believing that to kill a man is not the best way to improve him. If, however, such punishment is justifiable, it was, in my opinion, in the case of the king. As to the slaughter of the garrisons in Ireland, the mode of warfare in those days was less humane than it is now. The Protestants had been massacred wholesale, the Catholic General, Count Tilly, had slaughtered both the garrison and the inhabitants of the city of Magdeburg, while Alva, and other Catholic generals, had carried on a war of extermination. It was a sad and deplorable spectacle of religious warfare, and, rightly or wrongly, Cromwell thought that, doing what he did, was the best way to bring it to an end.

Political and religious freedom received an impetus during Cromwell's rule that has proved a lasting blessing to the nation. Cassell's English history, says: "The heroes and statesmen of the Commonwealth have left doctrines and examples which are still the study and imitation of nations." Hallam observes: "It is just to say that the maritime glory of England may first be traced from the era of the Commonwealth." And even Sir Walter Scott admits: "No government was more respected abroad than that of the Commonwealth." Unfortunately, it was followed by the Restoration, which I regard as being no fault of the principles which Cromwell enunciated. The truth is, the people were not prepared for self-government, having been trained amidst the influence of monarchy. Hence the new principles were not thoroughly understood by the masses, and the Commonwealth had to be sustained by force. A true Republic is not like a plant forced in the hot-bed of military power, but it resembles more a tree developed by the fresh air of freedom and personal cultivation. Still, I share Goldwin Smith's view that Cromwell inspired an awe

and reverence for the English name, and that he was the honest and indomitable exponent of principles that had found no parallel in any other period of our history.

CHARLES WATTS.

SECULARISM AND SOCIAL REFORM.

It was recently remarked by a writer in one of the reviews that what he styled the New Secularism—by the way, whenever you want to create a sensation now-a-days, you drag the word "new," by hook or crook, into your title—that the New Secularism was more and more concerned with the affairs of this world, with practical measures of reform, than with even the theoretical discussions of theologians and scientists, or the conflict between religion and science. It was alleged that people to-day—or the mass of reformers at least—were more interested in how starving men should have food to put in their bellies, and naked men clothes to put on their backs, than debating who was Cain's wife, or even whether Atheism or Christianity was the more reasonable. The drift of thought, in short, has taken a more "materialistic" form—to use the cant phrase of the religionist. But it is, of course, none the less secularistic—at least, so this writer alluded to admits. "We may," he says, "agree to denounce (how kind!) the too-apparent worldliness of the wealthy church-going classes, without drifting with the equally apparent current of Secularism setting in amongst the new democracy." So the "new democracy" doesn't debate who was Cain's wife, it simply leaves the whole business alone and concerns itself with an eight-hours' day and *Merrie England*. Which proceeding, in so far as it is genuine, proves that the "new democracy" is wise in its generation.

Now, if it be the case really that the drift of democratic thought is to ignore the whole religious juggle, then it is for Secularists largely a matter for congratulation. Not that indifference in itself is a good thing, but the indifference which ignores as worthless, because it has tested, is good. In so far, then, as the democracy is unreligious, and seeks to devote itself to attaining practical objects which shall make better this life, the Secularist object is attained. And it is well that a religionist like the Rev. Walter Walsh should see and admit that this movement of the democracy is secular.

But there are some things which must not be forgotten, and which it may be well to remind the "new democracy" of. And the first point is, that if the time has now arrived when the religious shams and the religious red-herrings which were dragged across the path can be ignored by the democracy, that result is largely due to the Secularist pioneers of the past, who actively attacked these shams and worked for their overthrow. Mr. Belfort Bax, if I remember rightly, has said that the social movement will swallow up the secular movement. Possibly. But let us not forget that the secular movement was an absolutely necessary prelude to the social movement. Until the chains and shackles that bound man's intellect were removed, it was impossible that the chains and shackles which bound him socially should be broken. And this brings me to the chief, or at least, the inspiring reason for Freethought and Secularist propaganda. Of course, truth is truth, and is worth fighting for, for its own sake. If the proposition that there is a hell be false, it is, for the sake of truth alone, well to destroy it, just as it would be well to attack the proposition, say that the sun was only fifty million miles away, or that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle was double the sum of the squares on the other two sides. All these propositions being false are, for the sake of intellectual truth, worth fighting. And if they were put forward with any degree of weight and authority, we would find men prepared to demonstrate again their falsity, just as we see scientists wrangling over sun-spots or the number of the primary colors. But then you would never get a great popular organisation to take up these academic questions, nor, as a rule, would you find them exciting much enthusiasm. People are not inclined to profoundly champion mere abstract truths where these truths have no practical bearing on life.

But with the Freethought propaganda it is different. That really touches life. After all—as a mere hypothesis—

the question of whether there be a god or a hell is as unimportant as whether there be canals on Mars. It is because the god-belief and the hell-belief are used as engines for the degradation of men, as weapons by which largely an unjust and hideous social system is maintained, that is why Freethinkers attack religion so hotly and so enthusiastically. When Mr. Goldbug first discovered—and it must have been far back in human history—that it helped to keep Jones and Smith contented if they were assured of a surfeit of good things hereafter; that they could be kept in hovels here and promised mansions of marble in the skies—in a word, when Goldbug discovered how to delude the mind and exploit the imagination, he had discovered a key to power. And when then a professional class arose whose business it was to dose Jones and Smith with these fairy-tales, the system was complete. Mr. Whitechoker was a friend of Mr. Goldbug—in fact, he represented the division of labor, it being difficult for the same individual to directly do the fleecing and the preaching at the same time. Though, indeed, they sometimes changed parts, Mr. Whitechoker going in for a bit of fleecing,* and Mr. Goldbug doing some preaching on his own account. And so the game went merrily on—and so it goes on to-day. The fat bishop with his thousands a year generally "has no doubt that some great object, known only to the Architect of the Universe, is served by the existence of poverty and suffering." And Goldbug, too—or the more diplomatic of the species—is profoundly distressed at the number of the unemployed. He mounts upon the worker's back, as Tolstoi says, weighs him down to the ground, and then assures everyone how distressed he is at the worker's condition, and how readily he would join in supporting any scheme to better it; he would vote for a Royal Commission, or even abolish the House of Lords—in short, he would do anything but—get off the worker's back.

But the first duty of those who would alter this state of affairs, who would end the reign of Whitechoker and Goldbug, is to clear men's minds of superstition. And Secularism is doing that. It is clearing the path. That is the function of Freethought. And when the way has been cleared of the rank growths which religion nurtures, it will be easier for the car of Progress to pass along. But where men are stunted by false and mischievous beliefs, where they do really think that they will have mansions in the skies if they live in dens here, no social progress is possible. You cannot make free in body those who are still slaves in mind. And Secularists are really, therefore, the advance-guard of the army of reform.

The work of the advance-guard, however, must not be forgotten, and, above all, it must not be undone. If the democracy becomes less enthusiastic or less active in the propagation of Freethought and Secular principles, it must be because these principles have been accepted and become part of the life of the people. And that brings me to the chief danger which lies before the democratic movement—the danger of Whitechoker coming back in another disguise. Already the metamorphosis of Jesus has set in, and we see the democracy being cajoled into a fresh slavery under a fresh name. This aspect of the case was well emphasised by a writer in a recent number of the *Free Review*. Labor Churches, Socialist parsons, bishops delivering sermons of the "new" pattern, Christian Social Unions; these things are in the air. And they are an omen. The old trick is being found out, and new tricks must be invented. Superstition, like everything else, must accommodate itself to its environment, and in a democratic age we will have a democratic superstition. Jesus now, it seems, was, in fact, one of the "unemployed." Which is, perhaps, the truest thing in the new Christology.

It is not to be supposed, of course, that I charge all these democratic Whitechokers with hypocrisy. Doubtless many of the sermons swelling with indignation at the evils of society, do really represent the thought and the heart of the preachers. But what I do point out is, that if these preachers want to remedy the evils they denounce, they must come down out of the pulpit and work. We have tried religion for a good while now, let us change the régime. We have had preaching and preaching and preaching for hundreds of years. Let us try good secular

* According to a recent number of the *New Age*, there are no less than forty-seven ministers of religion who hold shares in Messrs. George's Brewery, Bristol.

work, and leave the preaching alone. Instead, therefore, of, say, the Christian Social Union delivering courses of sermons in City churches, it really investigated the causes of the misery, and suggested what legislation or what changes would remedy it, the result would be infinitely more profitable.

But, above all things, the democracy must leave the old clothes of superstition behind. Patching the garment, even with the gaudiest of colors, is useless. "The choice," says the Rev. Walter Walsh, "of the near future is the choice between the religious and the secular ideas of life." That is so. And on the choice which the democracy makes will depend whether we fall back or go forward. The function of religion is to bolster up things as they are, and find consolation for those who are wronged; the function of Secularism is to investigate the causes of the wrong, and remove them.

FREDERICK RYAN.

INVENTION AND INJUSTICE.

BY COLONEL ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

INVENTION has filled the world with competitors not only of laborers, but of mechanics—mechanics of the highest skill. To-day the ordinary laborer is, for the most part, a cog in the wheel. He works with the tireless; he feeds the insatiable. When the monster stops, the man is out of employment—out of bread. He has not saved anything. The machine that he fed was not feeding him—the invention was not for his benefit.

The other day I heard a man say that it was almost impossible for thousands of good mechanics to get employment, and that in his judgment the Government ought to furnish work for the people. A few minutes after I heard another say that he was selling a patent for cutting out clothes; that one of the machines could do the work of twenty tailors; and that only the week before he had sold two to a great house in New York, and that over forty cutters had been discharged.

On every side men are being discharged and machines are being invented to take their places. When the great factory shuts down, the workers who inhabited it and gave it life, as thoughts do the brain, go away, and it stands there like an empty skull. A few workmen, by the force of habit, gather about the closed doors and broken windows and talk about distress, the price of food, and the coming winter. They are convinced that they have not had their share of what their labor created. They feel certain that the machines inside were not their friends. They look at the mansion of the employer, and think of the place where they live. They have saved nothing—nothing but themselves. The employer seems to have enough. Even when employers fail, when they become bankrupt, they are far better off than the laborers ever were. Their worst is better than the toiler's best.

The capitalist comes forward with his specific. He tells the working man that he must be economical—and yet, under the present system, economy would only lessen wages. Under the great law of supply and demand every saving, frugal, self-denying, working man is unconsciously doing what little he can to reduce the compensation of himself and his fellows. The slaves who did not wish to run away helped fasten chains on those who did. So the saving mechanic is a certificate that wages are high enough. Does the great law demand that every worker should live on the least possible amount of bread? Is it his fate to work one day that he may get enough food to enable him to work another? Is that to be his only hope—that and death?

Capital has always claimed, and still claims, the right to combine. Manufacturers meet and determine prices, even in spite of the great law of supply and demand. Have the laborers the same right to consult and combine? The rich meet in the bank, club house, or parlor. Working men, when they combine, gather in the street. All the organized forces of society are against them. Capital has the army and the navy, the legislature, the judicial and executive departments. When the poor combine, it is for the purpose of "exchanging ideas." When the poor combine, it is a "conspiracy." If they act in concert, if they really do something, it is a "mob." If they defend themselves, it is a "treason." How is it that the rich

control the departments of government? In this country the political power is equally divided among men. There are certainly more poor than rich. Why should the rich control? Why should not the laborers combine for the purpose of controlling the executive, the legislative, and judicial departments? Will they ever find how powerful they are? A cry comes from the oppressed, the hungry, from the down-trodden, from the unfortunate, from the despised, from men who despair and from women who weep. There are times when medicants become revolutionists—when a rag becomes a banner, under which the noblest and the bravest battle for the right.

How are we to settle the unequal contest between man and machine? Will the machines finally go into partnership with the laborer? Can these forces of nature be controlled for the benefit of her suffering children? Will extravagance keep pace with ingenuity? Will the workmen become intelligent enough and strong enough to become the owners of machines? Will these giants, these Titans, shorten or lengthen the hours of labor? Will they give leisure for the industrious, or will they make the rich richer, and the poor poorer? Is man involved in the "general scheme" of things? Is there no pity, no mercy? Can man become intelligent enough to be generous, to be just; or does the same law or fact control him that controls the animal or vegetable world? The great oak steals the sunlight from the small trees, the strong animals devour the weak—everything at the mercy of beak, and claw, and hoof, and tooth—of hand and club, of brain and greed—inequality, injustice, everywhere. The poor horse standing in the street with his dray, overworked, overwhipped, and underfed, when he sees other horses groomed like mirrors, glittering with gold and silver, scorning with proud feet the very earth, probably indulges in the usual socialistic reflections and this same horse, worn out and old, deserted by his master, turned into the dusty road, leans his head on the topmost rail, looks at donkeys in a field of clover and feels like a Nihilist.

In the days of cannibalism the strong devoured the weak—actually ate their flesh. In spite of all the laws that man has made, in spite of all advances in science, the strong, the heartless, still live on the weak, the unfortunate and the foolish. True, they do not eat their flesh or drink their blood, but they live on their labor, on their self-denial, their weariness and want. The poor man who deforms himself by toil, who labors for wife and children through all his anxious, barren, wasted life—who goes to the grave without ever having one luxury—has been the food of others. He has been devoured by his fellow men. The poor woman living in the bare and lonely room, cheerless and fireless, sewing night and day to keep starvation from a child, is slowly being eaten by her fellow men. When I take into consideration the agony of civilised life—the failures, the anxieties, the tears, the withered hopes, the bitter realities, the hunger, the crime, the humiliation, the shame—I am almost forced to say that cannibalism, after all, is the most merciful form in which man has ever lived upon his fellow man.

It is impossible for a man with a good heart to be satisfied with the world as it now is. No man can truly enjoy even what he earns—what he knows to be his own—knowing that millions of his fellow men are in misery and want. When we think of the famished we feel that it is almost heartless to eat. To meet the ragged and shivering makes one almost ashamed to be well dressed and warm—one feels as though his heart was as cold as their bodies.

In a world filled with millions and millions of acres of land waiting to be tilled, where one man can raise the food for hundreds, millions are on the edge of famine. Who can comprehend the stupidity at the bottom of this truth? Is there to be no change?

Are the "laws of supply and demand," invention and science, monopoly and competition, capital and legislation, always to be the enemies of those who toil? Will the workers always be ignorant enough and stupid enough to give their earnings for the useless? Will they support millions of soldiers to kill the sons of other working men? Will they always build temples and live in huts and dens themselves? Will they for ever allow parasites and vampires to live upon their blood? Will they remain the slaves of the beggars they support? Will honest men stop taking off their hats to successful fraud? Will industry, in the presence of crowned idleness, for ever fall upon its knees? Will they understand that beggars

cannot be generous, and that every healthy man must earn the right to live? Will they finally say that the man who has had equal privileges with all others has no right to complain, or will they follow the example that has been set by their oppressors? Will they learn that force, to succeed, must have thought behind it, and that anything done in order that it may endure, must rest upon the cornerstone of justice?—*Twentieth Century*.

CHRISTIANITY AND HONESTY.

If any Freethinker should regard Christianity as an association for the promotion of dishonesty, he need not enlarge upon the doctrines of salvation by faith, "Jesus paid it all," or the death-bed repentance of sinners. He can refer to the palpable fact that Christians never act up to their pretended beliefs, and that the beliefs themselves are very often, indeed, not held honestly. The *Non-Sectarian* of St. Louis, in its June number, says:—

"It is hardly an exaggeration to say that not one-half of those who profess a belief in the Apostles' Creed, and renew this profession at every religious service which they attend, really believe that Jesus rose from the dead, or that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, or in the resurrection of the body. Most thinking men of all denominations have long ago ceased to believe in these statements of the creed. There is no question as to what these statements meant to those who promulgated this creed—they used plain language to state that which they themselves believed, and which they intended to demand of others as a pre-requisite to church membership, and as a declaration of principles. To put any other meaning into them, or to try to explain away their literalness, is a species of literary juggling and legerdemain which would not be tolerated elsewhere."

Now, could this be the case if Christianity really encouraged intellectual honesty in its members? It encourages, on the contrary, the profession of what is not believed, and thus undermines truth and honesty. Children are taught in the school to say they believe what they cannot believe, and their whole life is one organised hypocrisy, because to say what they really think will outrage respectability.

A *bona-fide* Christian, one who really believes that God was born of a virgin in Palestine, and that he died to save us after we are dead from eternal damnation for sins committed before we were born, is as rare as the phoenix which St. Clement cites as a type of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christianity has only a Sunday existence, and even on Sunday infidelity may be, and is, preached from the pulpit, only it must be veiled in conventional phraseology. When will Christians be honest?

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

A Dangerous Book.

In Germany, some malcontents are circulating scriptural texts, such as the following:—

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."—Psalm cxviii. 9.

"Put ye not confidence in a ruler."—Micah vii. 5.

"Put not your trust in princes."—1'salm cxlvi. 3.

"Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child."—Eccles. x. 16.

"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."—Luke xvi. 15.

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you."—James v. 1.

The purpose of the malcontents is to show that, if all anti-revolutionary literature is prohibited, the Emperor will have to interdict the Bible.

THE BIBLE.—A true revelation, proceeding from a just and good God, and necessary to all mankind, ought to be clear enough to be understood by all the human race. But will the revelation, upon which Judaism and Christianity are founded, bear the test of this criterion? The elements of Euclid are intelligible to all who endeavor to understand them. This work excites no dispute among geometricians. Is it so with the Bible? and do its revealed truths occasion no disputes among divines?—*M. Boulanger*, "Christianity Unveiled," p. 28.

ASINITY.

GIORDANO BRUNO's *Cabala del Cavallo Pegasco* is like Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, a treatise and satire on the Asinity, and especially the asinine piety of his day. The praises of the asinine goddess are sung in a sonnet, of which Mr. Owen, in his *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, gives the following translation:—

O Sainted Asinity. Ignorance most holy!
Stupidity most sacred! Devotion most profound
Thou alone can'st make us learned, good and sound,
While human thought and study are now of value only.
Little availeth the search that men so fully
Employ by every art or science Speration,
Little availeth their sky ward contemplation
To gain the heavenly seat which is thy object solely.

What boots then, ye curious, your persistent exploration?
The wish to learn the secret of nature's laws and ways,
If the stars be water, earth, or fiery exhalation?
Holy Asinity despises wisdom's rays.
Folded hands and knees form her sole occupation,
Expecting from Providence the luck of better days;
All passes, nothing stays
Save fruition of that eternal peace,
Which God will give her after her decease.

ACID DROPS.

PRAYERS are seldom sensible, but there was a very good one used in Parliament in Oliver Cromwell's time—namely, that those who had zeal might have wisdom, and that those who had wisdom might have zeal.

What a contrast to this old prayer is the new one drawn up by the Bishop of Ripon for use during the present elections. "Grant us rectitude and prudence"—"banish from us prejudice and partiality"—and so forth, is all very pretty, but it is so general as to be utterly meaningless. It would be perfectly true, if you were asked a man's address, to say he lived in the universe, but it would not enable anyone to find him.

No doubt the Bishop of Ripon really wants to see a thumping Tory majority; one pledged to uphold the House Lords and especially the Bench of Bishops. The Rev. H. J. Wilkins, vicar of St. Jude's, Bristol, is honest enough to say that "the Church has become a huge political agency for the Tory party." This is true enough, except for one word. The Church has not *become* a Tory agent; it was never anything else.

During the Shahzada's visit to Liverpool he was entertained at a lunch in the Town Hall, and grace was said by a Mohammedan official, who recited a verse from the Koran. This excited the indignation of some Christian sky-pilots, who cannot bear to see a poacher upon their preserves. One of them says it "calls for a solemn protest on the part of all who are concerned for [the] honor of their Lord Jesus Christ." But why not let Jesus Christ look after his own honor? On the Christian theory he is well able to take care of himself.

This incensed sky-pilot went on to refer to the Armenian atrocities, which he said were perpetrated on Mohammed's express commands. But is not this a Christian calumny? We invite the Rev. William Hutton to indicate the text in the Koran upon which he relies in making this terrible statement. And if he finds it, which we do not believe he can, we will then ask him to compare it with the Bible God's express command for the extermination of Canaanitish men and the outrage of Canaanitish women.

We commented last week on a bad accident to a train full of pilgrims in Holland. Since then a worse accident of the same kind has occurred in America. Two large excursion trains were proceeding from Richmond, Windsor Mills, and Sherbrooke townships, in the east of Quebec province, crowded with pilgrims for the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré. One of the trains dashed into the rear of the other, demolishing two coaches and frightfully mangle their occupants. Many persons were killed, including three priests in charge of the pilgrimage. What an awful satire on the superstition of these excursionists! Several of them, doubtless, were going to the shrine of St. Anne for the benefit of their health, hoping to be cured by faith; and some of them died sooner than they would have done if they had stayed at home. Even the priests who were running the pilgrimage were smashed up. St. Anne could not help

them in their extremity. Faith will remove mountains, but it will not save a man in a railway accident. Sceptics and believers fare exactly alike—"For one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth so dieth the other."

Methodism does not seem to be too flourishing. Mr. Champness, of the *Joyful News Mission*, has had to dismiss sixty of his evangelists. This is more than half of the total number. Methodism wants—at least, that is the opinion of the *Methodist Times*—a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They are praying for it to come down at the Plymouth Conference. But we guess they'll have to wait the Holy Ghost's convenience.

Hugh Price Hughes calls the Methodists to arms. Rome and the Church of England are both making desperate efforts to strengthen themselves. "The fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty are attacked!" exclaims the author of *The Atheist Shoemaker*. Very likely. They always have been. Mr. Hughes and his friends help to keep up the laws against Secularism. They only cry out when their own privileges are endangered. On the whole, we should like to see them suffer a little. It would give them a "fellow feeling" with the down-trodden Freethinkers.

The *Two Worlds* draws a subtle distinction. It says: "True, there might be an Atheistic Spiritist, but not an Atheistic Spiritualist." Be this as it may, we have read more than once of spirits, or their mediums, who have shelved difficult questions by saying they have roamed through the universe without coming into any contact with a god.

Something like a miracle is reported in a Madras paper. A girl of ten, at Madura, is said to have refused alms to a mendicant, who thereupon looked at her steadfastly and went away. As soon as he disappeared, pebbles, cotton, thread, straw, grain, and other objects began oozing out of her eyelids every fifteen or twenty minutes. These are the sort of tales that are spread by the mendicants.

The "Song of Songs," which is not Solomon's, and which Grotius called an indecent poem, is defended by the Rev. Dr. W. E. Grillis in the columns of the *Northern Christian Advocate*, as fit for public as well as private perusal. He says: "There is not in the whole poem of five thousand words one impure thought or evil suggestion, unless it be at the one point from the polygamist king who has disobeyed his God and the law of Israel." Now if Solomon knew of the law of Israel, as we have it, which is very doubtful, it is certain he did not disobey it by polygamy, or by seeking more concubines, for these practises were carried on by all God's favorites, and there is nothing in the Bible to condemn them. God himself is spoken of as having two sisters—Aholah and Aholibah—at the same time, who bore sons to him, and such an idea would hardly have been used even in metaphor had it been reprobated.

One would think by the flourish of trumpets over the Christian Endeavors, etc., that the old faith was triumphant all along the line, and that infidelity is rapidly becoming unknown. Those who look behind the circus methods of the churches know there never was a time when they had to rely more on adventitious aids to maintain their position. The Rev. Dr. Scot Hershey, of Boston, says that Ingersoll in America counts two millions of intelligent young men among his followers, and in every Christian country the old faith is being rapidly undermined.

Henry A. Lush, a Great Northern Railway guard, who committed suicide in his brake, left a letter to his wife in which he expressed a hope to meet her in heaven.

A few months ago Mr. Foote lectured to a large audience at Sunderland on the question "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" Several friends of a body calling itself the Anti-Infidel League were present, and their behavior was simply scandalous. Although they knew that discussion would be allowed after the lecture, they hooted, hissed, yelled, and otherwise indulged in the most brutal interruptions. Since then an Anti-Infidel Leaguer, named F. W. Birkett, has written what he considers an answer to Mr. Foote. A copy of this pamphlet has been sent to us, and we have read it through. It is the work of a very green hand. Words are put into Mr. Foote's mouth which he never used, and the replies to what he did say—or, more often, what he was supposed to say—betray a most extensive ignorance of the subject. With respect to the Josephus passage, for instance, Mr. Birkett does not appear to have heard that anyone but Mr. Foote ever regarded it as a forgery, whereas it is stigmatised as such by an overwhelming majority of Christian scholars. The testimony in its favor quoted from Renan is not given accurately. It may be taken honestly from some English translation, but it is not what Renan says in the French original. We will leave Mr. Birkett at this point. He will see how little he understands the question when

Mr. Foote publishes the substance of that lecture in a separate form.

An acute writer says: "Every year of his life God is obliged to murder between sixty and seventy millions of human beings in order to keep down the surplus population of mankind." Besides the slaughter, large numbers are broken down in the struggle for life. According to the *New York Herald*, the American doctors say that paresis, or paralysis of mind and body is alarmingly on the increase in the big cities, owing to the worries incident to the increasing struggle for existence. New York is a hot-bed of the disease, which a century ago was unknown, even if it did exist. Civilisation is not without its drawbacks.

The Catholic League of South London sent the following question to Parliamentary candidates: "If returned to Parliament, will you do all in your power to secure that further and adequate financial aid from rates and taxes shall be granted by Parliament to all efficient Roman Catholic schools in England and Wales?" Twenty-four candidates had the wickedness or folly to reply to this question in the affirmative.

England is a free country. Of course everybody knows that. But the Secularists are robbed by law of their natural rights of property, while all religious establishments are subventioned by the State; and now the religionists are clamoring for public money to maintain their schools. What a peculiar sort of freedom it is, to be sure!

We regret that Mr. Storey has lost his seat for Sunderland. Mr. Gourley, however, retains his; and it was Mr. Gourley who took up the "Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill" during Mr. Storey's absence from Parliament through illness.

The Rev. W. W. Howard has removed to Leek, and the local *Times* gives him a two-column introduction to the inhabitants. Mr. Howard tells in his own way why the projected debate on the Soul, between himself and Mr. Foote, did not come off at Liverpool. "He is ready," says Mr. Howard, "to criticise my position, but he will not bring forward his own." This is—well, not accurate. Mr. Foote drew up a proposition which he would maintain in debate, as against Mr. Howard's; but the reverend gentleman wanted to draw up his own proposition and edit Mr. Foote's. Hence these tears.

In the current number of *Folk-Lore* it is mentioned that, in 1892, a child in Suffolk scalded itself with soup and died, though a "wise woman," one Mrs. Brundish, was sent for "to charm the fire out of her." The charm consisted in the repetition of these words:—

There were two angels came from the north,
One brought fire, the other brought frost.
Come out fire, go in frost.
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

A correspondent of the *Rutugon Times* says there are out there two distinct classes of Christians, who look on each other as enemies. They are the well to do, who style themselves "Caste Christians," and the poor, who are known as "Non-Caste Christians." The ministers have to pander to the Caste Christians, for it is from them they derive these emoluments.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in a sermon last Sunday, said that he sometimes got tired, and gloomy, and vexed; and at times anger or irritation would come upon him; but he kept an open book of pleasant poems on the table, of which he would read a few lines, and the irritation would melt away. We dare say this is a very good remedy. But how is it that the Archbishop finds it in a book of pleasant poems instead of in the Bible? Does poetry do as well, or better?

New York was visited by a terrible cyclone on Saturday night, July 13, and the outskirts of the city suffered severely. But the worst devastation was wrought at Cherry Hill, about ten miles distant. Several persons were killed by "Providence," and scores of buildings were blown down. One of these, a wooden church, was caught by the wind and turned completely round. Perhaps "Providence" will send another cyclone to turn it round again; otherwise the worshippers will have to say, like the Irishman, that the front of their church is at the back.

Mr. Keir Hardie has been defeated at West Ham. He went about the country fighting the Liberals and helping the Tories, and the Tories have repaid him by taking away his seat. Mr. Hardie is evidently a poor hand at a bargain. He will now be able to devote more time to preaching Jesus—unless he finds out what he ought to have discovered long ago, that Christianity is the greatest enemy of real progress.

The Rev. John Page Hopps says of the Unitarians, in the *Coming Day*, "Dozens of Unitarian chapels are not churches at all, but churchyards dull and dead." He ought to know, for he has been among them the major portion of his life.

Coleridge, who had been a Unitarian himself, said that Unitarians were not entitled to the designation of the term Christian. This reminds us of a story of a gentleman of that persuasion who was introduced one day to a Churchman of the stricter sort, who inquired: "Did you say you were a Unitarian? Ah! well, then, I can recognise you as a gentleman, but not as a fellow Christian." "Oh, never mind about that," was the breezy reply; "I can recognise you as a fellow Christian, but not as a gentleman!"

In the *Sunday Companion* the Rev. G. P. Merrick, chaplain of Holloway Gaol, tells of the murderer, Neil Cream, who, it was proved, murdered in cold blood no fewer than thirty-five women. According to Mr. Merrick, he was one of the most proficient Bible students in the gaol, and could recite from memory almost half the Bible.

The *Daily News*, writing of Coleridge and those who rake up all the old sins of authors, says these latter "establish the Pagan conception of retribution, and make punishment eternal." This is a Christian calumny on Paganism. It was Christianity and not Paganism which taught eternal punishment, and it taught it for fifteen hundred years, till humanity got ashamed of the doctrine which the *Daily News* now stigmatises as Pagan.

Referring to the "Woman's Bible," now in course of preparation by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and others, the *Catholic Union and Times* speaks of Mrs. Stanton as "the venerable maiden"! Is it possible that Father Cronin is so far behind the times that he does not know that Elizabeth Cady Stanton is a wife, and the mother of many children, some of them already known to fame? Or does he think that she is a modern "Mother of God" unaffected by the vicissitudes of maternity? In either case Father Cronin should come down into this century.—*Truthseeker*.

A "Bible Student" asks in the *New York Sun* why is it that Matthew and John, actual eye-witnesses according to Luke, avoid all mention of the ascension. "Dese sorter questions," said the colored preacher, "would upset any system of theology."

The Rev. J. J. Porter is a Baptist preacher. He is also the editor of the *Helper*, published in Jerseyville, Ill., and professes to be eager for a debate with "any living infidel scholar [dead ones being debarred] as to the correctness of the Bible." Here is a sample of what the Rev. Mr. Porter can do: "THOMAS PAINE. In 1792 he [Paine] went to Paris to engage in constitution-making with Condorcet. Soon he was imprisoned by Robespierre, and during the eleven months of his imprisonment he wrote the *Age of Reason*. He showed it to Dr. Franklin, who returned it, advising Paine never to publish it, but burn it up before it was seen by any other person, and thus he would save himself a great deal of repentance and mortification." The facts, as recorded by Mr. Paine himself, are that the first part of the *Age of Reason* was written in 1793, being completed in December of that year, six hours before the author's arrest took place. Franklin had then been dead about three years. I do not believe that the Rev. Mr. Porter desires to debate with Infidels on the "correctness" of anything. What he wants is a lying match.—*Truthseeker*.

The Rev. Mr. Easton, who claims to speak with knowledge because he has been a missionary in Persia, says: "All evidence goes to show that emancipated woman, so far from being a purifying and refining element in society, is herself an incarnate demon with nothing womanly in her but the name, a combination of Messalina and Lady Macbeth." Possibly Mr. Easton considers the Persian method of keeping women subdued and secluded preferable as it is more in accordance with the revealed word of God.

The refusal of the Rev. Johnson Myers, of Immanuel Baptist Church, Chicago, to baptise a colored applicant for membership, has made some talk among the colored population, and one of the leading black ministers, the Rev. Mr. Townsend, has retorted that he would rather take his portion in hell than go to heaven to meet such white folks as the Rev. J. Myers.

The Rev. J. L. Whitty, of Ramsgate, claims to have started Palestine Exploration, and puts his claims in verse as under:

Since he who scribes—Johannes Irwine Whitty
Explored Jerusalem, the Holy City,
Have two and thirty age-worn years fled by—
The present date below, marked Anno Domini.

Mr. Whitty may take the cake for his discoveries; he will hardly do so for his verses.

Providence has much regard for locusts, and in East Africa swarms of them eat up all the provender. A letter from the German mission there says: "Many people die of hunger. In a place near Mpwapwa, forty-six out of fifty inhabitants died of famine. Two weeks ago I was in a village where nine grown-up people out of seventeen had died of hunger in a single week. Hunger is the cry throughout the land."

During divine service a church at Calastarra, in Murcia, was struck by lightning. A child was killed, eight other persons were injured, and the building was set on fire. A very peculiar case of "Providence."

The Rev. W. Earle, a High Church clergyman, recently wrote a book in which he spoke harshly of dissenters. The *Greenock Telegraph* having criticised his view, Mr. Earle wrote to the editor: "Luther and Knox and Wesley, and all men like them, who opened the door for the sheep to leave the fold, must now have a hot corner. I could not believe that such incarnate demons are in heaven. All who oppose my book are enemies to the happiness of Christendom. Woe betide the papers which go against my book. In doing so they are going against God." This man of God evidently has the good old spirit of religion. But Luther, Knox, and Wesley also had a touch of the same complaint. They were not, therefore, incarnate demons. "Criticise me and you criticise God," is the common religious thought. Theists are obliged to make God such another as themselves. They must give God their own thoughts, having no other wherewith to endow him.

Mr. H. M. Stanley, the gentleman who went through Africa in such a Christian fashion, says it is written that "the whole earth shall know the Lord." We presume this means that Stanley was the Lord's advance agent. If so, the poor niggers must look out when the boss appears.

The *South Wales Times* devotes an article to "Secular Education and Atheism." It prophesies that if Board schools go on, "in two or, at the most, three generations, religion will be dead in the working classes of this country, and they will have sunk into Atheism." Horrible! most horrible! Sunday-schools, it seems, are inadequate to cope with the evil, wherefore the rate and taxpayer must be plundered for the support of denominational schools.

Mr. J. Kenyon, the Conservative candidate for Bury, has a funny idea of the duties of Atheists. He is reported as saying that though they cared nothing for religion, yet they ought to send their children to some denominational school to give them religious education. Mr. Kenyon apparently considers that Atheists give up religion because it is a good thing.

The *New York Independent*, a journal something like our *Christian World*, is flippant over the Woman's Bible. It says, "Why not? We have a Breeches Bible."

A. W. Malcolmson writes in the *Vegetarian Messenger* on "Biblical Difficulties Overcome." How naive he is may be judged from his saying, "It is remarkable that in the only model prayer Our Lord left us, he taught us to say, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Not our daily flesh or meat." He is unaware that "bread" here is generic like "meat." He goes on to say that, at the Last Supper, "he took bread and wine, vegetable products." Is he not aware that the Passover, which Jesus celebrated, included lamb? He does not notice that "Our Lord" partook also of fish, and said "Rise Peter, kill and eat."

When the people of Neuchâtel opposed Frederick the Great's interference in favor of a pastor of the Swiss Church who denied the eternity of future punishment, "Eh bien!" said the king, "si ces messieurs de Neuchâtel veulent être damnés à toute éternité, ainsi soit il." If these Neuchâtel gentlemen wish to be damned to all eternity, so be it. The universal salvation dangerous for themselves, but were fearful of its effect upon "their wives and servants."

James I. said: "No bishop, no king." He might have added: No cross, no crown. The king owned the bodies of men; the priests, the souls. One lived on taxes collected by force, the other on alms collected by fear—both robbers, both beggars. These robbers and these beggars controlled two worlds. The king made laws, the priest made creeds. Both obtained their authority from God, both were the agents of the infinite. With bowed backs the people carried the burdens of one, and with wonder's open mouth received the dogmas of the other. If the people aspired to be free, they were crushed by the king, and every priest was a Herod who slaughtered the children of the brain. The king ruled by force, the priest by fear, and both by both.—*Ingersoll*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, July 21, Milton Hall, Hawley-Crescent, Kentish Town : 7.30, "Secularism and the New Parliament."

July 28, Milton Hall.

August 4, Newcastle ; 11, 18, and 25, St. James's Hall, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—July 28, August 4 and 11, Camberwell.—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.

J. G. DOBSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

J. T.—*Isis Very Much Unveiled* is published at the office of the *Westminster Gazette*, price one shilling.

W. G.—The Melbourne *Harbinger of Light* says that Mrs. Mabel Besant Scott, only daughter of Mrs. Annie Besant, was baptised into the Roman Catholic Church on May 1. *Requiescat in pace.*

G. W. B.—We have always a large quantity of such copy on hand, and cannot guarantee an early insertion.

W. W. ROBERTS.—Your subscription is handed to our publisher, R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., to whom please send direct in future.

K. O. M. (Amsterdam).—James ii. 20 is evidently a contradiction to Galatians ii. 16. How otherwise can it be explained? Thanks for *De Dageraad*, and prosperity to Freethought in Holland.

J. KEAST.—Thanks for the trouble you have taken. See paragraph. Bristol shall be attended to as soon as Mr. Foote gets his Lecture-Scheme in working order.

A TRINITARIAN (Nottingham).—Your letter is too long for its importance. You ask "Is God responsible for his acts?" but you do not define "responsible." Hadn't you better prove that there is a god first?

J. SEDDONS.—Pleased to hear that the Manchester excursion was a success. These social gatherings tend to cement our party.

E. M. VANCE, 28 Stonecutter-street, will be glad to hear from any friends in the West-end who can distribute or exhibit bills of Mr. Foote's three Sunday evening lectures at St. James's Hall; also from friends who can undertake to assist in the sale of tickets.

H. COSGROVE.—Thanks, but Mr. Foote has not time to write letters in provincial papers. It is quite true that the Rev. W. W. Howard has held public debates with Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Symes; but it was very many years ago. Of course Mr. Foote is quite ready to debate with Mr. Howard on reasonable conditions. And the first condition is absolute equality. Christians must abandon their old ideas of privilege. They used to burn Freethinkers; now they assume airs of superiority, and expect us to be thankful for anything they concede to us. But we want no concessions. We simply want justice and fairplay.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) Alleged facts must be substantiated before anyone can be called upon to explain them. Much of the phenomena of hypnotism, in public performances, is deception, and often collusion. No hypnotic patient can tell anything but what is in his own mind or what is suggested to him. (2) We do not know what debates of Mrs. Besant's are now in print. (3) Mr. Foote objects to wearing either ticket—"Individualist" or "Socialist." His view is that society and the individual have their rights and their provinces. But this is not the place to discuss the matter.

H. MELLOR.—Parallels to the sayings of Jesus Christ are not in one book, but in many books. Jewish parallels are given in the famous *Quarterly Review* article by Deutsch, which has been reprinted in his "Remains."

C. G. QUINTON.—Very sorry to hear of the continued rowdyism in Victoria Park. See a paragraph in "Sugar Plums." If it is absolutely necessary, Mr. Foote will come down and see whether a meeting cannot be held in spite of the blackguards.

SHAREHOLDER.—The National Secular Hall Society still occupies the Hall of Science, though the mortgagee has more than once "demanded" possession. The Society's solicitors are now acting under the Chairman's instructions, and the result will probably be announced in next week's *Freethinker*. Of course it is ridiculous to expect a detailed statement of delicate business weak by week. This paper is read by enemies as well as by friends.

A. JACKSON.—It is a waste of time to reply to such a driveller. On one page he boasts of the downfall of Secularism, and on the next inquires whether his own paper is to live or die. With respect to your own query, the figures are an absurdity. Mr. Bradlaugh was never able to raise large sums of money for Secular halls. The sum he originally raised, twenty-six years ago, for the Hall of Science, is considerably less than has been raised for the same object since his death. It will be news to old members of the N.S.S. that "in Mr. Bradlaugh's time" the Society "could raise its thousands of pounds for special objects." Bible-bangers are never strong in arithmetic.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Rangoon Times—De Dageraad—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Western Mail—Liverpool Post—Progressive Thinker—Light—Two Worlds—Harbinger of Light—New York Sun—Clarion—Liberator—Truthseeker—Post—Literary Digest—Isle of Man Times—Freedom—Jerusalem Star—Glasgow Evening News—

Sunderland Echo—Good Templar's Watchword—Philosophical Journal.

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

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

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

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

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

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 *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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE has not been lecturing for some weeks. This evening (July 21) he lectures at Milton Hall on "Secularism and the New Parliament." North London Freethinkers should do their best, in spite of the phenomenal weather, to secure him a large audience. Mr. Foote also lectures at Milton Hall on the following Sunday; on the next Sunday he opens a new hall taken by the Newcastle Branch, and then he returns to London for his three Sunday evening lectures at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, of which full particulars will be given in our next issue.

Mr. S. P. Putnam lectured at Bristol on Sunday. Owing to the wonderful weather, which makes it a burden to sit indoors, and perhaps still more to the Parliamentary elections, his audiences were not so large as they should have been; but those who did attend were delighted. We hope the Birmingham friends will rally in strong force at Mr. Putnam's lectures to-day (July 21). The battle of the elections is over, and people should now be free to listen to wit and common sense.

Providence favored the L.S.F. excursion to Clacton-on-Sea with delightful weather, and when there the saints thoroughly enjoyed themselves roaming or boating along the shore, taking a sea-trip in the "Koh-i-noor," or driving into the country. Mr. and Mrs. Foote, Mr. and Mrs. Watts, Mr. Parris, Mr. Moss, Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Forder, Mr. True-love, and other well-known friends, were present and joined the common tea at Rigg's Retreat. In consequence of the beauty of the weather, the President said there would be no speaking, and briefly expressed a hope that there would be even better gatherings in succeeding years.

Mr. Joseph Symes has fought bravely against enemies and adverse circumstances at Melbourne, though we regret that he seems to be getting the worst of it at present. He is being sued for libel by one of the men who jockeyed him out of the hall he built for Freethought purposes, and at a certain stage of the proceedings he was charged with contempt of court on account of some remarks in the *Liberator*. Mr. Symes pleaded his own case, and denied that he meant to cast any slur upon the court; nevertheless the judge sentenced him to fourteen days' imprisonment.

Mr. Symes has apparently more than one man can do out at Melbourne. Bigotry seems as rampant there as it is here, and even more so. Mr. Symes brought on action for assault, and went into the box as a witness; whereupon he was asked a number of ridiculous and insulting questions of the "Where do you expect to go to?" order. It is scandalous that such proceedings should be tolerated in a court of justice. Our old colleague would be well-advised, in our opinion, if he refused to answer argumentative and hypothetical questions, which are only put for the purpose of raising a prejudice against him, and not at all for the purpose of eliciting relevant information.

Just as we are going to press we receive the *Liberator* for June 8, in which we note that Mr. Symes has won in the libel case, the jury returning a verdict of "Not Guilty." This prosecution had been hanging over Mr. Symes for many months, and he must feel relieved at its termination.

From the same number of the *Liberator* we see that the Secularists in Sydney are in trouble over their hall.

The late lessee left them with a large arrear of rent, and a Mr. Blake, who bought one of their promissory notes, has moved for a public auction. It is said that the Christians are trying to get the place into their hands. Altogether it is a grave question whether Secularists should take the risks and responsibilities of property until they can hold it in trust under the full protection of the law.

Mr. Robert Forder lectures in Victoria Park this morning (July 21), and we hope the platform will be well supported by local Freethinkers. This open-air station has lately been the scene of much Christian ruffianism; indeed, the Branch has appealed to Mr. Foote, who may have to intervene personally. It will never do to let our meetings be stopped by blackguards who disgrace the name of Christianity.

There is a revival of interest in Spinoza in Holland. A new translation of his *Ethics*, by Dr. Gorter, has appeared, and a second translation has been announced. In Germany, also, Spinoza becomes more and more known, studied, and appreciated.

Mr. J. E. Dobson heckled the Liberal candidate, Mr. Samuel, at Stockton-on-Tees, on the Blasphemy Laws. Mr. Samuel replied, before a meeting of two thousand people, that he was in favor of the fullest extension of religious liberty, that he considered Freethinkers should be as free as any other body to disseminate their opinions, and that he would support Liberty of Bequest and Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

We know not what denomination the Rev. J. Howarth, of Sunderland, belongs to, but he certainly deserves a Sugar Plum for the way in which he supported Mr. Storey for bringing in a Bill to repeal the Blasphemy Laws. Mr. Howarth said he demanded that a man should be regarded as much a citizen, though he was an Atheist, as a man who was a Christian man and a Christian minister. This statement was received with much applause.

The Bristol Branch of the N.S.S. sent our "Questions for Parliamentary Candidates" to the candidates for the North and South divisions of their city. Mr. Lewis Fry replied that he was "in favor of complete civil and religious liberty," though he appears to think that people ought to be punished if they "give reasonable grounds of offence to the prevailing religious opinion of the country," which stultifies his first declaration. Mr. Charles Townsend replied that the "Blasphemy Laws ought to be repealed at once." Mr. E. S. Hill's reply was evasive. He was in favor of religious liberty (of course!), but "to give complete and careful answer to your questions would entail an amount of time and research which you will easily understand I cannot now give."

Mr. W. H. Lawless, one of the Liberal candidates at Bristol, replying to a local Secularist, wrote: "I am distinctly opposed to any laws inflicting disabilities upon citizens because of religious or non-religious opinions." Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the well-known Tory, wrote: "The Blasphemy Laws are doubtless old-fashioned in form and detail; but I think it necessary that offensive or indecent attacks on the faith of the great majority of the people should be liable to punishment; and therefore I am opposed to their repeal, unless something of that kind could be substituted in their place." That is, Sir Michael will not help to destroy the present stick with which Christians beat Freethinkers, unless he is certain of having in its place another stick, not perhaps so heavy, but good enough for the purpose. "Offensive" and "indecent" are what Bentham called question-begging epithets. Even "attacks" is a term of the same description. Criticism and discussion are christened "attacks," then they are called "offensive attacks," then "indecent attacks," and by that time the poor critic has become a monster deserving twelve months' imprisonment.

The annual picnic of the Failsforth Secular Sunday-school, which was arranged for July 20, has, in consequence of the election taking place on that day, been postponed to the following Saturday, July 27. The excursion goes to Hebden Bridge, the times of trains, etc., being the same as already arranged.

On Sunday last about forty members and friends of the Manchester Branch journeyed to Chester in a saloon carriage, where, after a pleasant run of seventy-five minutes they arrived, and were met at the station by two local Freethinkers and conducted round the walls of the city. In the afternoon a number of friends from Liverpool arrived, and the whole party proceeded up the river in a special barge to Eaton. The scenery was delightful, and the sail enjoyed by everyone. Before leaving Eaton a photograph group of the party was taken.

The July *Monist* opens with a thoughtful paper by Professor Joseph Le Comte on "The Theory of Evolution

and Social Progress." His idea is that as organic evolution differs from mere chemical evolution, taking up new factors, so human evolution or social progress involves new factors to those of organical evolution. "Organic evolution strives only for the survival of the fittest. Social progress strives to make as many as possible fit to survive. In organic evolution the weak, the sick, the helpless, the old, the unfit in any way, perish, and ought to perish, because this is the only means of strengthening the blood or physical nature of the species. In social progress, on the contrary, the weak, the sick, the helpless, the old, the unfit in any way, are sustained, and ought to be sustained, because sympathy, pity, love, strengthens the spirit, the moral nature of man, the distinctive human nature. In a word, in organic evolution war is the great element of advance; in rational evolution, peace." Professor Le Comte admits that the moral nature is conditioned by the physical nature, but thinks the problem of their claims, and of how to obey the law of love and mutual help, without weakening the blood of the race by inheritance, can be solved by a rational education, physical, mental, and moral.

Leslie Stephen helps to explain how his brother, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen became a Freethinker, having been brought up in Evangelical Puritanism. He was one of those few who have sought to realise hell, and the fewer still who have thought of it as for themselves. "He imagined the whole world transformed into a globe of iron, white hot, with a place in the middle made to fit him so closely that he could not even wink. The globe was split like an orange; he was thrust by an angel into his place, immortal, inconsumable, and capable of infinite suffering; and then the two halves were closed, and he left in hideous isolation to suffer eternal torments.

Fitzjames's elder brother gave the first blow to this ghastly creed, and then Paine's *Age of Reason* shook him further. Defending Rowland Williams in the famous *Essays and Reviews* case, compelled a further examination of orthodoxy, and he came at length to think that religion would not survive theology, but that morality would survive religion.

Mr. George Meredith made a speech for the first time in his life on Saturday evening. It was at the dinner of the Omar Khayyam Club. "While coffee was being served," says the *Daily Chronicle*, "the beautiful face of the greatest of living novelists was observed in the doorway, and all the members rose to their feet and welcomed him with the greatest enthusiasm." Mr. Edward Clodd, the president, greeted Mr. Meredith on behalf of the Club, which calls itself after the great Persian poet so exquisitely rendered into English by the late Edward Fitzgerald. Omar Khayyam was a Freethinker as well as a poet. "Your large infidel," Tennyson called him, in a dedication to Fitzgerald.

Some of the American Unitarians are far more liberal than their English co-religionists. At New York, some time ago, they invited Colonel Ingersoll to address them, and we see from the *Boston Investigator* that Mr. J. E. Rensburg has been invited by the Rev. Mr. Simmons, pastor of the first Unitarian Church of Minneapolis, to occupy his pulpit. It would be cruel if Mr. Rensburg gave his popular lecture on "The False Claims of the Christian Church."

The Universalists of America are simply those who disbelieve in eternal punishment, and offer treacle without brimstone. They have churches of their own, but all Unitarians, and many others, are practically Universalists. The late Stephen Pearl Andrews once said to them a very good thing. He observed: "You Universalists have squatted on the biggest word in the English language. Now," said he, "the world is beginning to want that big word, and you Universalists must either improve the property or move off the premises."

The *Boston Investigator*, under the heading "What We See," has the following: "That the National Secular Society's Annual Conference in England was a great success; that Messrs. Foote, Watts, Putnam, Moss, Cohen, Heaford, and Gilmour were in fine form at the evening meeting, and addressed a large and enthusiastic gathering."

The *Two Worlds* says that Spiritualists, as well as Secularists, are not recognised by the law, and cannot, as Spiritualist societies, hold property, receive bequests, or own halls, and this is an ever-increasing source of anxiety to its promoters. It urges all its readers to question candidates if they are in favor of the removal of all religious disabilities.

The Italian Chamber of Deputies, by a majority of 264 to 62, has declared the twentieth of September, the anniversary of the entry of the Italian troops into Rome, a national holiday. This will be gall and wormwood to the Papacy, which still yearns for a restoration of its temporal power.

Professor Bain is among the new recipients of £100 a year from the Civil List Pensions. We congratulate Lord Rosebery's Government on its courage in recognising the services of so advanced a thinker.

The friends of Dr. August Specht, editor of *Menschentum und Freyen Glocken*, have been celebrating his fiftieth birthday, and, as it happens, the twenty-fifth anniversary of his becoming a Freethought speaker. Dr. Specht has written many German Freethought works, of which the most important is a *Popular Development History of the World*, which has reached a fourth edition.

The *Crescent*, "A Weekly Record of Islam in England," edited by W. H. Abdullah Quilliam, has been enlarged to sixteen pages. It is full of interest to all students of Mohammedan affairs, and, as our readers know, does not hesitate to carry war into the Christian camp.

The death of Professor Huxley leaves Herbert Spencer the sole survivor of the four intellectual giants who so powerfully upheld the doctrine of man's evolution from the lower forms of life. No man has done more than Huxley to popularise the study of science, and, by his remarkable literary gifts, to give it an interest and a charm which was irresistible, and which was sure to lead the reader to explore deeper into the storehouse of knowledge after reading one of Huxley's works.—*Secular Thought*.

The second edition of *Une Mère Vierge* (Mr. Foote's *Virgin Mother*), translated by C. Cilwa, has appeared in French. It is published by M. Felix Roy, 27 Passage de l'Opera, Paris.

THE HONORARIUM TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

It will be remembered that at the last Conference of the National Secular Society a letter was read from Mr. George Anderson, suggesting that its President "should be recompensed for his loss of time and money in serving the party's interests." Accordingly, the Conference appointed a Committee, consisting of Mr. George Anderson, Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Robert Forder, and Mr. George Ward, to consider the best plan to be adopted for carrying out the suggestion. The Committee met and drew up a circular, which probably most of the readers of the *Free-thinker* have seen.

This Committee unanimously passed the following resolution, proposed by Mr. George Anderson, and seconded by Mr. George Ward: "That the sum to be paid the President of the N.S.S. for this year be £100, to be confirmed, augmented, or diminished each year by vote of the Conference."

By this resolution it was the desire of the Committee to carry out the object, for which it had been appointed by the congress of delegates, in the most satisfactory manner both as to terms and amount, leaving the Society to act yearly in future as circumstances might dictate.

It is to be hoped that what has been done will meet with the approval of the Secular party, and that its members will subscribe the required amount as promptly as possible.

CHARLES WATTS.

[Subscriptions can be sent to Miss Vance, 28 Stoncutter-street, London, E.C., or paid to any member of the Committee.]

Subscriptions Received:—

Already acknowledged, £35.
Per R. Forder: W. Hunt, 10s. 6d.; J. D. Leggett, 2s. 6d.
Per Miss Vance: J. T. Embleton, 10s.; S. Seal, £5;
F. Bureh, 2s. 6d.
Per G. Ward: E. Calvert, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Caisey, 4s.

We stand in the great presence of Nature, whose inspiration should be that of modesty, humility, and love. To accept Nature as the great cause of all things is that theory which involves the most coherent consequences, and it binds us to attempt explanations of mysteries by laws of science and philosophy. These methods may not lead us far, but they will not lead us wrong, and they will keep us modest by enforcing some proportion between what we declare and what we know.—*G. J. Holyoake, "The Trial of Theism," p. 43.*

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker"
(June 22).

THE friends in Liverpool treat me royally. On Monday I have a red-letter day indeed, a day crowded with the noblest pictures of English scenery and its ancient magnificence. Through the kindness of Mr. Towers I am driven by him over to the olden and beautiful city of Chester, seventeen miles distant. We are accompanied by Mr. W. C. Balfour and Mr. Lawrance Small, who is one of the most active workers for Freethought in England, at home amid the treasures of modern science. I had good company, a delightful day, a road smooth as marble, a fine horse, and England's most superb springtime attire. We cross in the ferry-boat to Birkenhead. They don't have ferry-boats here like our big ones. The passengers go over in one boat and the teams in another, and the boats are small in comparison with our palatial ones. Birkenhead is a place of 100,000 inhabitants, and has a somewhat monotonous appearance, with its rows of houses, and scarcely a green thing to be seen; but soon we are out in the country, flying by the long, green hedges, the extensive fields, the rows of horse-chestnut trees, the white and red bloom of the hawthorns, the rugged oaks, and at times the mountain ash, or rowan, with its brilliant blossom. We pass by Port Sunlight, where they manufacture the Sunlight Soap. This is an immense industry. A beautiful village has been built around the huge factories, a kind of model village, where the working man can buy his own home by small instalments, and enjoy the conveniences of modern life. Mr. Lever, the originator of this vast enterprise, was a Freethinker, I understand, and a contributor to the support of Mr. Bradlaugh. He is a reformer after the Owen style. He believes in helping humanity by industrial methods. After passing Port Sunlight we roll through Eastham, Sutton, and other quiet and antique villages, over which the breath of change has never swept. At Chester we pass under the ancient wall built, I believe, by the Romans. The word "Chester" is from the Latin word *castra*, and indicates an ancient camping-ground. The present city of Chester has grown beyond the original ramparts, but these still remain as landmarks of centuries ago.

Old-fashioned streets and houses, overhanging walls, covered walks alongside the stores, etc., meet the view in this stately cathedral city of about fifty thousand people. The cathedral is the first object of interest. It was built in the thirteenth century. It is falling to pieces in places, and is now being renovated. It is a beautiful building, solemn and sweet in its voices and pictures of the past, as we wander through its freighted gloom, gaze upon its panels and carvings, its rich adornments, and the emerald carpet and shining trees that greet the blue heaven in the central space of its encircling walls. An ancient verger waits upon us and reveals the hidden beauties. He tells us he has been here for over fifty years. No doubt he loves the cathedral. Its carvings are among the most marvellous and skilful in the world, wrought in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. There was a sly twinkle of humor in the old man's eyes as he pointed out the quaint and curious figures. I must confess I was astonished. I supposed that in a cathedral so imposing, with its dim, religious light, there could be nothing in its carvings but scriptural and theological subjects. Ah me! those old monks had a vein of comedy, and in the very heart of the church the artist had pictured the humors of human life. There were carvings of clowns dancing, of lovers, of Red Riding Hood—a legend, it seems, of the tenth century—of a quarrelling married couple, with elbow against elbow, as if each sought for more room and neither would yield. There was, furthermore, the final tragedy, when they went at each other with knife and hatchet. There was also, as the verger smilingly hinted, a prophecy of Chicago, a picture of two great fat hogs and a litter of pigs, with the parson coming after his tithes. Well, it was funny to see these humorous displays in the holy sanctuary. Those old monks could not have been such a bad lot when they were capable of enjoying these secular pictures in the very midst of their religious solemnities. The gargoyles on the outside of the cathedral are equally comic and grotesque. One represents Gladstone, with feather pen in mouth, toppling over the Roman dynasty, and another Disraeli in a similar position. I must confess I do not understand the significance of theological art.

One of the most novel things I witnessed in Chester was a picture of the Virgin Mary being impregnated by the Holy Ghost. I do not dare to describe it. I could hardly believe my eyes when I looked at it; but there it was, on one of the main streets of Chester, on a building that must have been erected in the thirteenth century or before. What fools we mortals be! I said to myself, as I looked at that hideous caricature.

Chester is on the river Dee. We watched the salmon-fishing, which is quite an industry here. As I noted the fishermen hauling in the net, the music of the poet's song

murmured in my brain, "Across the sands o' Dee." Near the river bank are the ruins of the oldest church in Chester, of the twelfth century, I believe.

At the landing-place my friends charter a steamship, the "Volunteer," to take our company up the river to the estate of the Duke of Westminster. Why should we not travel in pride and glory like any grandee of the land? It was a beautiful voyage. We left behind the gracious, venerable city, glittering on the high banks of the river. The prospect before us was infinitely sweet, the placid river, clear and smooth, the green banks, and the softly gliding vessel. Every moment there was a change

Into something rich and strange.

It is indescribable, the perfect loveliness, the solitude, the motion, the city fading from view, and only the winding liquid pathway with emerald splendors on every side, and ever-varying shades of color.

We reach the beautiful estate of Westminster. Here are the stables which produce the most famous horses in the world. Here is the magnificent park, with great trees, and the deer and sheep grazing on the ample green. The residence of the Duke seems like a village as we approach. There are the outbuildings and lodges, the chapel and tower, the main structure itself, and the golden gates, and the obelisk. We pass through the magnificent suite of rooms where royalty is entertained, where glorious pictures grace the walls, and statues gleam, and precious stones shine; where there is everything that wealth can buy. The duke has an income of a million pounds a year. He owns enormous quantities of land, houses in London, etc. I believe he is the richest duke of the realm. When he is away from his gorgeous palace visitors are permitted to enter, and the proceeds are devoted to charitable purposes. The Duke himself will show visitors about if he happens to be present; and the visitors do not always know who is their guide, and some amusing blunders occur. But the Duke takes it all in good part. I guess he likes to study human nature that way. I should think he would want some such relief from the awful dignity of his position, which must occasionally be tiresome. It is like keeping a big hotel. He has accommodation for over one hundred guests. He can't spend all his money whatever he does. I don't believe he enjoys himself one bit better than we Secularists did on this glorious day. The great house was just as beautiful to us as to him, with all its gay and splendid surroundings. The voyage in the golden evening from the palace to the city was like an enchantment, as if we were in the realms of poetry itself. The new moon shone out from the rolling clouds as we bowled along to Birkenhead, from whence we could see the far glittering lights of Liverpool glancing up and down the river away to the distant sea itself. And thus passed a day filled to the brim with bright experiences.

Wonderful and many are the mountain and sea views in the glorious land of Wales. I can scarcely describe the ever-varying prospects unfolding in sunlight and mist and cloud. Immense hills, cultivated to the very top, sweep away in the vast distance; lovely vales intervene, beautiful villages and ancient dwellings contrasting with the pomp and pride and circumstance of modern life, which now overflow these once wild and untrodden regions. Wales is a favorite place of resort for the fashion and wealth of England. Llandudno is an elegant seaside city, with superb hotels and residences, a delightful beach, exquisite expanses of water, and rugged surroundings. The coaching tours, however, are the supreme thing, with the "tally-ho," the four-horse stage, with seats on high, as if you were riding on the roof of a house. It is an illuminating voyage, through the air almost, I might say. I could take only two of them, as my time was short. I arrive at Llandudno from Liverpool, Wednesday, May 29, at noon, and immediately take the trip through Synchant Pass to Penmaen Mawr. We travel through the old town of Conway, about five miles distant, and view the ruins of its once magnificent castle, which for ages has towered upon this historic coast. With melancholy grandeur it greets the sun of to-day. It gives a noble idea of the massive structures of the old fighting times, when war was the normal condition of humanity. It would seem impossible to take this castle by storm, so impregnable are its defences, so strong its towers and walls, protected by precipitous shores and frowning hills. One can imagine how things were in those tumultuous and bloody eras, now forever gone, with their glory and their chivalry. Beyond Conway we sweep into an amphitheatre of magnificent hills, variegated with the splendor of modern thrift and invention. Every inch of ground is apparently used for man's benefit. There are no waste places. Even the Synchant Pass makes pasture for the wandering herds and flocks. It presents a grand a romantic appearance as we plunge down its tremendous grade. The coaches here, however, don't go with the thundering whirl of our Californian stages. They put on the brakes in Wales, while in California they bid "farewell to every fear," and urge the horses to a resounding gallop. People are more slow and cautious on this side, and

the traveller does not feel every moment as if he were launching into eternity. After Synchant Pass we come to the charming village of Dwygyfylchi—pronounce it if you can; I can't. It is as much as I can do to spell it. Near by is the Fairy Glen, where, for the moment, as you gaze through the forest arcades and into the tumblings water, one seems to be a thousand miles from civilisation. On top of the huge hill which encircles the glen is the "Druid's Circle," an ancient temple of worship, one of the most remarkable remains of the dim and mystic past. The coach continues on to Penmaen Mawr, where the mountains reach down close to the sea, and where the sea stretches away with magnificent and ever-changing illuminations, sweeping to the horizon, or framed in with outlines of the vast and rugged coast. We return by a different route, where equally pleasing and exhilarating pictures adorn the pathway. In the evening thousands of tourists swarm along the sands or on the great pier. Music fills the air. The lights flare in a wide semicircle, the mountains glimmer in the dusky sky, the waters fling back the glow, and a scene of beauty and animation flows on until midnight. The morning hour is equally enchanting. The sun flashes over the surrounding pinnacles, the splendid buildings appear in gorgeous ranks, while the children and dogs and donkeys gather on the beach, and everybody seems to be in a mood of careless festivity, in unison with the magnificence of earth and sky.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

July 21, Birmingham.

August 11, Failsworth; 18, Leicester; 25, Liverpool.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York on Sept. 7, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Religious Knowledge.

The general reader has probably had a surfeit of apocryphal specimens of "English as she is wrote," answers by school-children to questions in history, etc., but the following samples are genuine, and worthy of preservation. They are taken from recent Sunday-school examination papers, and were quoted last month before the Presbyterian Commission of Victoria by Mr. Wishart, the examiner in connection with the "Allan Request": Question—"What is effectual calling?" Answers—"Calling two or three times at once, or else calling all the time." "The work of God's grace whereby we are enabled to live more unto sin and die unto righteousness." "The work of God's grace whereby we are removed into another world." Q.—"What is urged in the Tenth Commandment?" A.—"Not to be thankful for what we've got." "To do everything without covetousness, and look upon ourselves with full contempt." Q.—"Give a proof text showing that we should pray for what is required for the support of life." A.—"We should pray that Christ would be kind to our parents, deliver us from evil, dinner, breakfast, bread and butter, and other requisites." Q.—"What two classes of men came to see the child Jesus at Bethlehem?" A.—"Wild men of the East." "Wise men of the East offered Jesus the franchise" (frankincense). Q.—"What cheering words did the Lord speak to Paul at Corinth?" A.—"You shall never see my face again." Q.—"Who was the first martyr?" A.—"Martin Luther." "Agrippa." Q.—"What were his last words?" A.—"I am the light of the world." "Be sure and kill David." Q.—"What would have saved Sodom from destruction?" A.—"Ten riotous persons." "Water—they had no fire brigade." Q.—"Why did God command Abraham to offer up Isaac?" A.—"Because he was not a good man, and did not keep the Sabbath." Q.—"Name three ways in which the Sabbath was broken in Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time." A.—"They married infidels, worshipped asses, and trod wine presses." "Hawkers ran about the streets." "A." in "Harbinger of Light."

The Devil is called the "Father of lies." There is no instance given in the Bible in which he lied, but millions of people have told billions of lies on the Devil.—*Blue Grass Blade.*

REJECTED LOVE.

THE world is full of pain and woe,
But, lest their God be deemed oppressing,
Some pious Christians seek to show
That every seeming ill's a blessing.

They tell us that the Lord above,
By harm desires our welfare hastened,
And chastens those who've won his love,
Yet Christians don't like being chastened.

It's chiefly those he has not blessed
With tumors, cancers, gout, or blindness,
Who loudly state the Lord knows best
And advertise his chastening kindness.

This queer conceit, without a doubt,
Would make the most afflicted cheery,
If one strange fact did not leak out
That actions contradict their theory.

If for some purpose, good and wise,
The Lord should bless them with insomnia,
They steal the sleep their God denies
With chloral—*et hoc genus omnia*.

His blessing—small-pox—they would shirk
By laws enforcing vaccination;
His chastening cholera they burke
By quarantine and sanitation.

By poison God may bless in vain,
The favored foil him with emetics;
And baulk his "purifying pain"
With opiate drugs and anæsthetics.

And with his highest blessing—death—
The key to Heaven, believers own it,
They fight until their latest breath
In frantic effort to postpone it.

But still they prate and still believe,
Despite the favors they've rejected;
They little think how God must grieve
To find his chastening love neglected.

The view of evil thus supplied,
No doubt possesses great attraction,
And, just a little modified,
May yield a useful rule for action.

Behind the cloud there shines the sun,
So welcome pain since God has sent it,
And piously say "Thy will be done,"
When you have failed to circumvent it.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.

A False Claim.

If not so false, it would be amusing to read in Church papers, and hear from pulpits, the indebtedness women are under to Christianity for their elevation from a species of slavery. Christians borrowed their social institutions, according to their own representations, from the Jews. The only condition a woman could visit the synagogues was to go by side streets and alleys, and, when attending upon religious exercises, they were shut off from all intercourse with the worshippers by the interposition of a latticed partition.

Down to within fifty or sixty years women occupied separate places in Christian churches, seldom being seated promiscuously through the assembly. Here they must remain silent, and learn of the priests. We believe it was the Universalists, some fifty years ago, who made a place for her in the pulpit, the Unitarians afterwards extending to her similar privileges.

When we recall Paul's cruel restrictions relating to the fair sex, and the implicit observance of his petty meanness in regard to them by Christians of all denominations, down to so recent a period, we would suppose they would remain silent on the subject until the last man with recollections of fifty years ago was at rest.—*Progressive Thinker*.

If the story of the Fall is not the true record of an historical occurrence, what becomes of Pauline theology? Yet the story of the Fall as directly conflicts with probability, and is as devoid of trustworthy evidence as that of the Creation or that of the Deluge, with which it forms an harmoniously legendary series.—*Huxley*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MADMEN OR CRANKS?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As one of your regular readers, although not claiming to be of the fraternity of Atheists, I must really object to Mr. J. M. Wheeler, in his article upon F. Nietzsche, saying that "Jesus, Mohammed, Joan of Arc, Jacob Boehme, Francis d'Assissi, George Fox, and Emanuel Swedenborg were all insane." Surely no intelligent reader, having read the life-histories of such as Mohammed, George Fox, and E. Swedenborg, would believe them to be insane or mad, in the ordinary sense of those words. Take Swedenborg, for instance. I have been assured by a New Church minister (Rev. G. J. Woodford) that the "Memorable Relations," or supposed spirit communications appended to some of Swedenborg's works, were added after his death when the sect began to put forward his views for acceptance, and a Church was formed. It is certainly clear that Swedenborg was a learned man, a scientific inventor, and held high offices in the Swedish State somewhat analagous to our Mr. Gladstone to-day, and to call him insane is ridiculous.

Then, leaving out of the question the debatable nature—mythical or human—of Jesus, a study of the life of Mohammed will justify no one in calling him mad, as well style Cromwell or Napoleon Buonaparte mad, a remarkable and shrewd man; the legendary history, of course, has been added since his death by admirers and others.

As to Joan of Arc being mad, this person, also in her life, shows remarkable courage and intelligence of action; in fact, a high-minded patriot of the female order, whose heroic exploits have now become veiled in legendary lore, and expanded into much which is visionary and mythical; but why blame or asperse the maid for this? It appears to me that there was much method in the madness of these persons, and it is quite an abuse of words to style such great souls, as above mentioned, as mad or insane. Rather should their life-work receive our respectful homage, and, by placing ourselves *en rapport* with the men and the times in which they lived, seek to gain from their heroic actions some impetus or inspiration to animate the age in which we live and work.

THOMAS MAY.

[The very purpose of my incidental illustrations was to show that Nietzsche could not be summarily dismissed on the ground of his madness. As to whether the persons I named were insane, it is a question for experts. If Mr. May denies they heard voices, saw visions, and exhibited other traits of insanity, he speaks out of the plenitude of his ignorance, and I advise him to read Maudsley's *Pathology of Mind*, and Ireland's *Blot on the Brain*. Instead of blaming or aspersing these ecstasies of genius, I said "I dearly love a crank," and argued that there was an insanity which rises above the common level, as well as an imbecility that sinks beneath it. I do not blame Mr. May, but I notice it is usual with him to catch hold of the wrong end of the stick.—J. M. W.]

PROFANE JOKES.

"Johnnie, why did not the lions eat Daniel?" "'Cause they didn't know he was so good."

Mamma (to little girl of four who has been naughty)—
"You wicked girl! You know if I cannot see you some one can." Little Girl—"Who can, then?" Mamma—"God can." Little Girl—"Where is he, then? I can't see him. You know I'll have no peeping."

Aunt Dinah, the colored cook, was caught giving the fatest turkey to her friends. She substituted a leaner one, and said the fat all fried out.

The next Sunday was the first in the month, and Dinah, who was a professedly devout communicant of the church, was promptly in her place at the beginning of the services. Her mistress was also a communicant, and watched with interest to see if Dinah would partake of the holy communion.

But Dinah, apparently, had no conscientious scruples to keep her away. She knelt at the altar rail as devoutly as if her conscience had been devoid of guilt.

On their return home the mistress called her servant to her, and, in a tone of mild reproach, said: "Oh, Dinah, how could you go to the holy table with such a load of sin on your soul?"

"I ain't got no sin on my soul, Missy," was the reply.

"Why, Dinah, not after you stole that turkey and gave it to your friends, and then lied about it?"

"Oh, la, Missy!" exclaimed the impenitent cook, "do you s'pose I'se goin' to let that old turkey hen stan' between me and my bressed Lawd?"

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.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Secularism and the New Parliament."
BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.45, social gathering for N.S.S. members and friends. Tuesday, at 9, dance.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Civilisation."
WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, open discussion—"Morals, the Outcome of Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. G. Hertzfeld, "The Real and Ideal Jesus."
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity Critically Examined."
CAMBERWELL GREEN: Tuesday, at 8, a lecture.
CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Curse of the Cross."
DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture.
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, S. R. Thompson, "Slavery." (Collection for Benevolent Fund.)
FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11, debate between Lucretius Keen and Job Williams, "Atheism or Christianity—Which has Done Most for Mankind?" 3.15, E. Calvert, "Is the New Testament Worthy of Credit?"
HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "Christianity and Evolution." Thursday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Evolution and Darwinism."
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection"; 3.30, "The Bible and Evolution." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Evolution and Darwinism."
ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, a lecture.
KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Tales from the Jew-Book."
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.
LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, W. Heaford, "Bible Lessons in Morality."
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Heroes and Martyrs of Free-thought."
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Religion and Insanity."
REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, S. F. Easton will lecture.
TOTTENHAM GREEN: 3.30, S. R. Thompson, "The Origin of the Gods." (Collection on behalf of Sam Standing.)
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, R. Forder will lecture (collection for L.S.F.); 3.15, Stanley Jones will lecture.
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. Guest, "Atheist or Theist: Which is the Fool?" 7, W. Heaford will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Museum Concert Hall, Bull Ring): 11, S. P. Putnam, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 3, "Christ and the Nineteenth Century"; 7, "Christianity and Woman." (Friends from a distance can obtain dinner and tea.)
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, C. James, "Christianity and Civilisation."
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, C. Doeg, "Religious Materialism."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 6.30, "Who Was Jesus Christ—God, Man, or Myth?"
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, J. P. Gilmour, "South Sea Mission Bubbles"; 3, "The Science and Superstition of Hypnotism"; 7, "The Natural History of the Christian Religion." Tea at 5.
STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Theosophy, a discussion.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, J. Keast, "Christian Evidence."
CHATHAM (corner of the New Brompton-road, High-street): 11.15, C. James, "Christianity and Modern Thought."
DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.
MANCHESTER (Stevenson-square): Saturday, at 7, C. Cohen, "Secularism." Sunday, at 3, "Christ as a Teacher."
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Mr. Selkirk will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road.—July 20 and 21, Manchester; 23 to 26, Blackburn; 28, Stockton-on-Tees; 29 and 30, Middlesboro'. August 1, Wood Green; 4, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Deptford; 6, Camberwell; 8, Wood Green; 11, m. and a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 15, Wood Green; 18, m. and a. Finsbury Park; 22, Wood Green; 25, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—July 21, m. Camberwell, a. Victoria Park, e. Camberwell; 24, Hyde Park; 25, Hammersmith; 28, m. and c. Wood Green.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—July 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Tottenham. August 4, Camberwell; 11, Westminster; 18, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—August 4, Kingsland.

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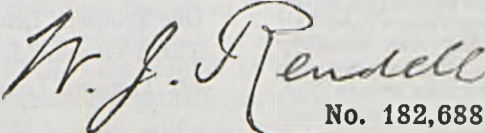
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