

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## A REVOLUTION.

BEFORE the meeting of parliament is a favourite time for journalistic sensations. On a former occasion of this kind the *Daily Chronicle* started a discussion on "Is Christianity Played Out?" During the past week or so it has found room for another discussion, which was started by "An Unknown Quantity," under the heading of "Is it a Revolution?" As this writer was allowed two columns of the largest type, it is to be presumed that his letter was regarded as of considerable importance. His style is lucid enough, but his drift is rather obscure. Apparently—but we speak under correction—he wishes to congratulate English society on its passing through a beneficent revolution, which will bring it back to healthier views of human existence. The great sex problem, for instance, has been overdone, and sexual discussions are ceasing to command their former exaggerated attention. Levity and frivolity have run their career, and society promises to become more solid and serious.

All this is very edifying, and particularly so when we look into the writer's account of the origin of the levity and frivolity from which society is advancing.

"Many men living can remember the time when the Agnostic was popularly imagined as a drunken, foul-mouthed tinker. But ere long it appeared that the Agnostic had been imagined wrongly, and was in reality a man of culture, a man of science, or a lady novelist. Disbelief was no longer socially ostracised. On the contrary, young people in drawing-rooms were almost morbidly anxious to tell you that they had lost their faith, and were unreasonably sanguine in their hope that the fact would interest you. I do not want to overstate the case, but I think it will be generally allowed that the great barriers of religion were at that time much weakened and broken down. What followed? Not the outbreak of crime that some expected, for the recruits of Agnosticism were not from the criminal classes. Not the rigid life by rule of reason that others had foretold—for the two primary instincts go for something. A spirit of restlessness followed, a spirit of inquiry, a hatred of fixed forms and traditional ideas. One thing after another was tried; nothing was too new, too wild, too extravagant. Reverence decreased. In the birthplace of this spirit of unrest something was done to keep reverence, and Positivists worshipped nothing in particular in a little place off Fetter-lane. But in spite of such efforts the general feeling of reverence did decrease. For the slavish feeling of fear that also decreased neither orthodox nor unorthodox are likely to feel any regret. The extravagance and levity which have been so noticeable among us may be traced, perhaps, in part to this weakening of the barriers of religion."

Now, if the writer means—and what else can he mean?—that disbelief led up naturally to Oscar Wilde, we beg to tell him that he completely misunderstands his subject. Oscar Wilde was never, we believe, an Agnostic. He represented absolutely nothing but himself. In literature or art he was merely an idiosyncrasy. The representative unbelievers have been men and women of great seriousness of mind and character. Who can associate frivolity with the names of Buckle, George Eliot, Mill, Clifford, Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer? Was there anything frivolous

about the sayings and doings of Charles Bradlaugh? His personal appearance indicated intense earnestness. He was not "An Unknown Quantity." He was a great public force—a daring champion of unpopular ideas; and his courage and self-sacrifice brought him to an untimely grave.

It is good of this writer to admit that Agnosticism was not recruited from the criminal classes. But is it not precisely those classes amongst whom Christianity boasts its sublimest conquests? You are quite uninteresting in Christian circles if you have always been just and honorable. The son who stays at home, does his work, and looks after his father's business, is a commonplace character; but the prodigal son, who fools away his time with drunkards and harlots, is a great attraction. Christianity rejoices over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. Go to the Devil first, if you want to make a first-rate Christian afterwards.

The *Chronicle* writer speaks pompously of "the barriers of religion." One would think they are the only real defences of morality and clean living, whereas many of the dirtiest and most villainous characters in history have been conspicuously pious. And what is the use of mouthing the word "reverence," as though it were of definite and unalterable value? Surely the value of reverence depends upon the worth of what is revered. And why this cheap sneer at Positivism? It requires neither valor nor wit to indulge in such a recreation. Positivism may be ever so wrong intellectually; that is a point which we need not discuss at present; but it certainly holds aloft an ideal which is far more rigorous than the ideal of Christianity. To say that the Positivists "worshipped nothing in particular" is sheer inanity affecting smartness. They worshipped Humanity. An abstraction, you will say; but what more is any god in the world's pantheon, even the god of Theism or the very god of the *Daily Chronicle*?

It seems to us that this "Unknown Quantity" must have moved among the virtuosi. He states that disbelief ceased to be socially ostracised: surely he refers to chatter about disbelief rather than to disbelief itself, the affectation rather than the reality. Social ostracism still continues for those who take any open and active part in the propagation of "infidelity," just as the law, which allows a certain individual freedom of thinking, interposes all sorts of obstacles the moment you set about advocating Free-thought in a public way, and especially if you do so in concert with others of the same persuasion.

These very reasons, even if there were no others, render it extremely improbable that disbelief should lead to "extravagance and levity." When a man finds the world against him, not for any crime or vice on his part, but because he has honestly thought for himself, he is in danger of becoming too serious. It is fortunate, indeed, if he does not become a Pessimist. On the whole, therefore, the "breaking down of the barriers of religion" seems to us the very best guarantee of that beneficent revolution which the *Chronicle* writer is proclaiming.

G. W. FOOTE.

## MISSIONS IN CHINA.

THE massacre of Christians—one man, nine women, and a baby—at Kucheng has caused a thrill of horror throughout the land, and, what may prove more useful, has excited discussion on the utility of missions, and their political relations, in China. Mr. Eugene Stock, the editorial secretary of the Church Missionary Society, has himself, in a long letter to the papers, met a question, which should be solved, not in the hot blood of indignation, but in the calm light of reason. He says:—

"I speak the mind of hundreds of missionaries when I say that they have no personal desire for anything in the nature of vengeance, even for such terrible outrages as we now deplore. But Great Britain cannot in China pass lightly over the murder of British subjects who have a right to be there. The British Government will, I doubt not, take all measures in this case that are right and necessary, especially with a view to the future protection of British residents; but the last thing we desire is that the Gospel should be carried into China at the point of the bayonet."

If Mr. Stock means that every effort should be made to bring the criminals to justice, we concur. Lord Salisbury has promptly demanded this, and it has been as promptly conceded by the Emperor of China. But Mr. Stock makes the demand, "missionaries must be protected." Does he mean they should be followed and protected by gunboats and soldiers? That is simply impossible. China will feel the results of her disastrous war with Japan for many years to come. Rebellion has been fomented, fanaticism fanned to a flame; disbanded soldiers rove the provinces, ready for any mischief; secret societies abound. These "Vegetarians" are twelve thousand strong. They are well armed and organised, and are able to withstand the Chinese troops. According to Mr. Waters, who has been British Consul at Foochow, and who has had thirty years' experience of China, they are no roughs, but abstemious and "peaceful, praiseworthy, and well-conducted people. They never drank or smoked, and were, in fact, something like a Band of Hope in England." We shall see presently that they have special causes of hatred against the "foreign devils," who, they believe, bring opium, war, and immorality in their train.

The missionary should know that he risks his life. If prepared to take all risks on himself, we might admire his zeal, even while lamenting it is not zeal according to knowledge. But this is just what he does not care to do. He claims the privileges of the *Civis Romanus*, and expects his country to back him in every difficulty. As a politician once said in the House: "Every missionary wants a gunboat at his back!" Worse, he insists on having his womankind with him, though he knows they are regarded by the Celestials as only the members of a harem. Young girls, fresh from home and school, are sent into the interior of a disturbed country, believing in the efficacy of prayer, and relying on the protection of a God who does nothing. The imprudence, nay, the cruelty, of those who urge girls to embark on such a career for the salvation of their souls is nothing short of scandalous. Mr. Eugene Stock says: "But what if women claim a right to a share in spiritual warfare?" He tells us "the men and women of the missionary committee dare not refuse to accept, and even to call for, such invaluable offers of service." Is this reason or fanaticism? Because some young girls, with inflamed religious feelings, and ignorant or oblivious of the condition of things in China, claim to share in spiritual warfare, do the men and women who stop at home, and the editorial secretary, who lives by sending others out, "dare not refuse them," but even call for others? Would Mr. Stock give a free head to his own daughter if she wanted to go? Mr. Eugene Stock reminds us that the spread of Christianity has been "attained at the cost of many precious lives." It has, indeed. Those who know the real history of Christian missions know that it has not, however, usually been the lives of the missionaries. Christianity has been spread by the sword quite as truly as ever was Islam.

There is, it is said, monumental evidence that Christianity was preached in China before the seventh century. What has been the upshot of a thousand years, more or less, of missionary work? The missionaries have made themselves and their creed so abhorred that they are constantly in danger of outrages. The opposition to Christianity in China comes from the educated classes. It is said this

is because Christianity tends to weaken their authority. But there are numerous other reasons, as anyone who has read the paper by Wong Ching Foo in the *North American Review*, entitled "Why I am a Heathen,"\* will know. Wong Ching Foo says he retreated "shudderingly from a belief in a merciless God who had long foreordained most of the helpless human race to an eternal hell. To preach such a doctrine to intelligent heathen would only raise in their minds doubts as to my sanity, if they did not believe I was lying." The common expression used of missionaries by the shrewd Chinese is "Lie-preaching devils." Li-Hung-Chang, the Prime Minister, said to the Rev. Gilbert Reid, of the Presbyterian North China Mission, as he records in the *Forum* of June, 1893: "Well, you needn't come back to China; you had better reform the American people, so that they will treat our Chinese laborers a little better." In California these have often been stoned, mobbed, and murdered by fanatical Christians. In violation of the treaty of 1869, the United States has passed Chinese Exclusion Acts, designed "to prohibit the coming of Chinese persons into the United States." When they see their own countrymen persecuted and excluded abroad, can it be wondered the Chinese desire the white men to return to their own country? They cannot understand that holy avidity for the salvation of souls which is accompanied with the introduction of opium, rum, and rifles. They cannot appreciate the gospel of Jesus Christ and gunboats. The Rev. George Smith (*Visit to the Consular Cities of China*, p. 54) records that they thus express themselves: "Perhaps this doctrine may be very good, but we wish that you would first try it on the English themselves, for they are wicked men. When this doctrine has made them better, then come and speak to us."

Mr. Alexander Michie, in his work on *Missionaries in China*, notes that the recognition of Christian missions was forced on China. He says (pp. 5 and 6): "Toleration of Christian missionaries, extorted by force from China, placed Christians on a different platform from the other foreign religions, Mohammedanism and Buddhism, to which China of its own notion extended complete toleration. Christianity is therefore inseparably associated with the humiliation of the empire—a calamity which is yet fresh in the memory of the living generation."

The sole ground on which toleration was claimed for Christianity was that it taught men to be virtuous, and the Chinese, says Mr. Michie, "have some difficulty in recognising in the actual Christianity of real life the innocent disguise which theoretical Christianity was made to wear when presented to them at the point of the bayonet." Chinese society is founded on filial duty. When they hear that in the Bible there are such injunctions as to hate father and mother for the sake of Christ (Luke xiv. 26), and to let the dead bury the dead, they are astonished at any such creed claiming to be divine. Mr. Michie says (p. 67):—

"It so happens that, impure as the Chinese imagination may be, the whole body of their classical literature does not contain a single passage which needs to be slurred over or explained away, and which may not be read in its full natural sense by youth or maiden. And to people nurtured on a literature so immaculate in these respects there are things in the Bible which are calculated to create a prejudice against its teachings, even in well-disposed minds."

Mr. R. S. Gundry, writing in the *Fortnightly Review* on "Missions in China," gives his testimony against the indiscriminate distribution of the Bible. He observes that the Chinese are apt to be offended at the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter. The proceedings of Ruth are open to question, and Samuel's treatment of Agag looks rather barbarous. Mr. Michie mentions that missionary tracts are coarsely illustrated by such scenes as Jonah being swallowed by the great fish, and Jael in the act of driving her tent-peg through the temples of her sleeping guest. The story of the Incarnation, which lies at the very foundation of Christianity, offends the sensitive heathen Chinese.

Mr. Michie's book is a valuable one, and in the following passage he throws some light upon the present massacre coming at the hands of the Vegetarians. He says (p. 57):—

"Societies, whose bond of union is abstinence from flesh, alcohol, opium, tobacco, and impurity, and whose members are held strictly to their rules, are under the ban of the missionaries. They always pronounce such

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kind of abstinence 'idolatry,' a verdict always ready to hand, which saves troublesome examination. One practice, which seems to be most obnoxious to the missionaries of certain sections, is Vegetarianism, which is rather common in China. This, it appears, is one of the subtlest wiles of the Devil to make the Chinese simulate goodness, even before the arrival of the missionaries, and accordingly the victims of this deadly delusion must be saved from their vegetarian diet at least, if not entirely from the vegetarian superstition. A single breach of the vow is all that is required to destroy the accumulated merit of half a lifetime, and the missionaries naïvely relate the snares they set for these pseudo-virtuous people to entrap them into transgression. The breaking of an egg, innocent as it looks, is sometimes the means blessed to this end; and we read of wily old converts laying earnest siege to new inquirers in order that, by some means, they may be seduced into eating pork in their company—a sort of equivalent of 'taking the shilling.'

Those who wish to drive the Chinese out of America and Australia always complain of their immorality. We need not, then, be surprised that similar charges are made by the Chinese against Europeans, who are believed to introduce alcohol, opium, and impurity in their train. The missionary, if earnest, is as fanatical as the Chinese, and goes into danger as blindly. If a humbug, he lives, according to the *Hong-Kong Daily Telegraph* most of them do live, in luxury and with a retinue of servants such as he could never hope to have at home. In either case he incurs the ill-will of the native, and he should do so at his own risk.

J. M. WHEELER.

## THE VALUE OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

(Concluded from page 500.)

WHEN Christians put forward the Bible as being the very word of God, all-sufficient for revelation of himself and salvation of us, we naturally ask first for its credentials. When, where, and how did God give it to mankind? We, of course, should have thought that, in vouchsafing this unique document, on which the eternal destiny of our race is said to depend, he would have taken care to do so in such a manner that its origin and its communication by himself would be quite beyond dispute; as, for instance, by delivering it to the earliest men in a form which, being imperishable, should ever be preserved by the human family as the absolute and invariable standard by which all copies and versions could be tested, just as we, in our endeavors at accuracy, have ordained and preserved standards of measure and weight. And surely it would have been easy for God the omnipotent to distinguish this original standard by such a supernatural character as would make all future men who referred to it recognise, without doubt, that it was of him and from him. But we soon find that his ways are indeed not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. No such standard exists, because no such standard was ever given by him; except it is stated in the case of the Ten Commandments, which he himself, it is said, wrote on two tables of stone, and of which he made a duplicate when Moses had shattered the original; this which was afterwards conserved in the most holy place of the temple of Solomon (2 Chron. v. 10).

Certainly the many alterations which portions of the Bible have undergone do not evince any special care, either upon the part of God or man, to preserve what was originally written. The Rev. E. Myers, in his *Bible and Theology*, says that "no people could have been less careful of their sacred writings than the Jews." Modern criticism is most emphatic in its verdict against the notion that the writings of the Bible have maintained their original form. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Davidson, who occupies a front position amongst English Biblical scholars, in his *Canon of the Bible* writes: "As to Ezra's treatment of the Pentateuch, or his specific mode of redaction, we are left for the most part to conjecture. Yet it is safe to affirm that he added—making new precepts and practices in place of, or beside, older ones. Some things he removed as unsuited to the altered circumstances of the people; others he modified" (p. 25). "The scribes who began with Ezra, seeing how he acted, would naturally

follow his example, not hesitating to revise the text *in substance* as well as form. They did not refrain from changing what had been written, or from inserting fresh matter" (*ibid*, p. 34).

In referring to the New Testament, Dr. Davidson observes: "The exact principles that guided the formation of a canon in the earliest centuries cannot be discovered. Strictly speaking, there were none. Definite grounds for the reception or rejection of books were not apprehended . . . . If it be asked whether all the New Testament writings proceeded from the authors whose names they bear, criticism cannot reply in the affirmative" (*ibid*, p. 153). Thus Dean Alford was quite justified in writing in his book, *How to Study the New-Testament*: "These Gospels, so important to the Church, have not come to us in one undisputed form. We have no authorised copy of them in their original language, so that we may know in what precise words they were originally written. The authorities from which we derive their sacred text are various ancient copies written by hand on parchment. Of the Gospels there are more than *five hundred* of these manuscripts of various ages, from the fourth century after Christ to the fifteenth, when printing superseded manual writing for publication of books. Of these five hundred, and more, no two are in all points alike: probably in no two of the more ancient can even a few consecutive verses be found in which all the words agree. . . . It is not a word more than the truth to say that it [the New Testament] abounds with errors and inadequate renderings. . . . A formidable list of passages might be given in which our version either has confessedly misrendered the original, or has followed a form of the text now well known not to have been the original form" (pp. 18-21, 22).

The Higher Criticism is valuable, inasmuch as it shows how fallacious the old orthodox ideas of inspiration were. It is no longer contended that the "inspired book" is perfect, for Canon Gore says "it is of the essence of the Old Testament to be imperfect" (*Lux Mundi*, p. 274). He quotes Professor Cheyne, who, speaking of certain Bible narratives, "protests against the supposition that they are true to fact" (*ibid*, p. 288). Now, if the Bible be "imperfect," and its narratives not "true to fact," as these Christian writers allege, what becomes of the orthodox claim that the Scriptural records are trustworthy? Truly Freethought investigation has borne its practical and useful results. The Bible has, indeed, failed to successfully withstand the attacks of the *Age of Reason*.

This criticism has, moreover, shown that the allegation that the Church of Rome has preserved the Bible intact is the very opposite of fact. The Rev. Dr. Irons asks: "Did she in truth, from the first, prize and preserve in some ark of safety the autographs of apostles, of evangelists, or make diligent search after the authentic manuscripts of the prophets?" "The earliest Christian writers," continues the Doctor, "strikingly exhibit that neither the Roman nor any other Church had critically or authoritatively, in any sense, settled the grave question as to what books should be admitted, or inquired at all, so far as it appears, for authentic copies. . . . If, then, any may be thanked for the Canon of the New Testament, it is the Church of Alexandria; but not even in that literary communion have we any attempt made to preserve or ascertain the originals of the Gospels or Epistles. . . . And what has been the condition of the Sacred Word since the third century (for all questions as to the correction of the text slept for at least a hundred years after Origen)? An uncritical Septuagint, and an uncritical Greek Testament in the Greek Churches; the common Syriac Version of the third century in the Oriental Churches; half-a-dozen different versions in the different African communions; the Vulgate in the West: these in some way sufficed the Christian world for many ages. With some of these—the Septuagint, the Peshito, the Syriac, and the Egyptian—the Roman Church had nothing to do. As far as we know, she never thought of examining them. If that was her duty, she was entirely unfaithful to it. . . . Such, then, are the facts bearing on the claim of the Church of Rome to rule over Scripture, and to subordinate it to herself. She did *nothing* to the Canon for 400 years; *nothing*, except by individual and much-neglected and opposed doctors, for 500 more; *nothing authoritative* till the sixteenth century; *nothing satisfactory to herself* even then; *nothing to settle* by authority either the Hebrew or Greek text, till this hour. Any claim on her part to paramount authority over the

Written Word is contrary to every fact of history" (*The Bible and its Interpreters*, pp. 49, 50, 52, and 59).

As to the Biblical chronology, modern criticism has clearly brought to light the fact that it is thoroughly erroneous. The pyramids, temples, and tombs of Egypt, dating back five thousand years, with their inscriptions, their dynastic records, their pictures, and other works of art, prove that that country must have been populous, maturely organised, skilled in many arts and handicrafts, at a period when, according to the book of Genesis, humankind consisted of but a few families. Samuel Laing, in his *Human Origins*, says: "It is quite impossible that, if man and all animal life were created about 4,000 years B.C., and were then all destroyed save the few pairs saved in Noah's Ark, and made a fresh start from a single centre some 1,500 years later, there can be any truth in Darwin's theory of evolution. We know for a certainty, from the concurrent testimony of all history, and from Egyptian monuments, that the different races of men and animals were in existence five thousand years ago as they are at the present day; and that no fresh creations or marked changes of type have taken place during that period" (p. 6). The same writer also remarks: "The chronology from Abraham to Moses is hopelessly confused" (*ibid.*, p. 241). Equally incorrect are the dates given of the birth and death of Jesus, and of many other events narrated in the New Testament.

The Higher Criticism is also valuable because it strikes a severe blow at Bible idolatry, substituting reasonable examination for the blind acceptance of traditional literature. It is this criticism which has destroyed the belief that whatever is found in the Bible should be accepted irrespective of its nature and tendency. More and more it is being recognised that all books, to be of practical service, should be our servants, not our masters. Let us, therefore, disencumber ourselves of all faith in a supposed supernatural revelation, and see what we can do with the revelation of nature as expressed in the living world of which we are a part, and expressed, likewise, more or less clearly, with more or less of human perversion, in the works of the men who came before us, among which the books bound up as the Bible have their due place. Surely nothing can be clearer to the unprejudiced judgment than the fact that we can never read and interpret anything aright, be it work of man or work of nature, while we in any sense count it fetish.

CHARLES WATTS.

### A USELESS GOD.

I DO not often agree with Roman Catholics. When I do our unanimity is wonderful. Yet I find myself in accordance with a part of the *Defence of Prayer*, by Father Barry, who, in the *August Nineteenth Century*, replies to Mr. Norman Pearson's sketch of a religion destitute of prayer, grace, miracles, and faith, as the religion of the future. Dr. Barry says such a religion is not worth having. I say ditto. The fact is, Theists have so attenuated their faith that it is neither worth blessing nor banning. Their central dogma made a big splash at one time, but, by broad spreading, it has dispersed to nought. God retires so rapidly at every advance of science that one cannot now get even the glimpse which Moses got in the cleft of the rock. What does Humanity want with a God who sits apart where sounds of human sorrow never mount to mar his "sacred, everlasting calm"? Such a God will never have real worship. He is not worth his salt, and shall have no pinch of incense from me. A God who does nothing, as Dr. Barry says, is no God. Does the universe require a figure-head which sails with the ship, but cannot steer it? We have no use even for a Constitutional Deity, who reigns but does not govern, and has virtually abdicated in favor of natural laws. The once Absolute Monarchy, which never administers justice or listens to petition, is represented by a vacant throne, which might as well be removed, to make way for the Republic of Man. Nietzsche proclaims that God is dead. He died out of compassion for sufferings he neither could relieve nor cure. Who shall say Nietzsche nay? If God never shows himself, he may be, as Elijah said of Baal, asleep, or peradventure on a journey. At any rate, if he has no interest in my concerns, certainly I have none in his. What is God, what are gods, to us, if there is no eye to

pity distress, no arm to save from disaster? Without this your God is but a word, excellent for priests to conjure with. The only God humanity can really care for is a special Providence—one who guards and guides his children, who never appeal to him in vain. Is there such a God? For the metaphysical figment offered us by Neo-Theists is not even worth swearing by. The best description I have seen of the Immaterial Entity of the metaphysicians is the following: "Take a box 12 feet by 12, exhaust the air, and then tell your friends you have 144 feet of solid deity." A God in the form of a wafer to put on your tongue is better than that; though a square meal is better than either.

Now, Catholics have a live God, who can make himself into a wafer, and puts in a miraculous appearance occasionally, just to show he has not burst like a bubble, and evaporated into thin air. Such a God is not as good as the old gods, who did everything; but he is certainly better than Carlyle's Deity, who "does nothing."

I agree, too, with Dr. Barry that, once admit a God, it is no use objecting to miracles. Swallow a deity, and you can swallow anything. Once open your gullet wide enough to gulp an Infinite Person who created all out of nothing, and you need not pause to strain out transubstantiation. Admit the big Magician in the skies, and you need not shy at any magic on earth. The more the better, for the less excuse will there be for scepticism.

Well, then, Dr. Barry, I concede your premises. If there be such a God as you proclaim, miracles are possible. prayer can be answered. But where is the evidence of such a God? I have seen no miracles. My prayers have not been answered. You trot me back to the lives of the saints; no first-hand testimony, but the lying legends of your Church. I smell a rat. Your corporation could never exist, and live without work, but for this belief in a God, who gives you your power, and can be approached through your ceremonies. All theological success depends upon telling people there is One—or More—who cares for them, that prayer will be answered, that every hair of our heads is numbered, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father's knowledge. But I notice that the sparrows fall all the same. Mr. Pearson says "natural causation prevails universally"; but he does not like to utter the inference I draw, that Theism is a worthless delusion.

Dr. Barry, instead of trotting out the sort of God I want, gives me a string of words about a spiritual world holding in its grasp the world of "natural causation," playing upon it as an instrument, guiding its powers to ends which of themselves they could not attain, etc. *Hypotheses non fingo*. Where is the evidence? Produce your God, and I will be ready to swallow all the rest, even down to Father Barry's power to create the Creator out of dough.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

### BEGINNINGS OF SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE.

AT the base of the vast structure of the older Scriptural interpretation were certain ideas regarding the first five books of the Old Testament. It was taken for granted that they had been dictated by the Almighty to Moses about fifteen hundred years before our era; that some parts of them, indeed, had been written by the corporal finger of Jehovah; and that all parts gave, not merely his thoughts, but his exact phraseology. It was also held, virtually, by the universal Church that, while every narrative or statement in these books is a precise statement of historical or scientific fact, yet that the entire text contains vast hidden meanings. Such was the rule; the exceptions made by a few interpreters here and there only confirmed it. Even the indifference of St. Jerome to the doctrine of Mosaic authorship did not prevent its ripening into a dogma.

The book of Genesis was universally held to be an account, not only divinely comprehensive, but miraculously exact, of the creation and of the beginnings of life on the earth; an account to which all discoveries in every branch of science must, under pains and penalties, be made to conform. In English-speaking lands this has lasted until our own time. The most eminent living English biologist has recently told us how, in every path of natural science

he has, at some stage in his career, come across a barrier labelled "No thoroughfare.—Moses." A favorite subject of theological eloquence was the perfection of the Pentateuch, and especially of Genesis, not only as a record of the past, but as a revelation of the future.

About the middle of the twelfth century came, so far as the world now knows, the first gainsayer of this general theory. Then it was that Aben Ezra, the greatest Biblical scholar of the Middle Ages, ventured very discreetly to call attention to certain points in the Pentateuch incompatible with the belief that the whole of it had been written by Moses, and handed down in its original form. His opinion was based upon the well-known texts which have turned all really eminent Biblical scholars in the nineteenth century from the old view by showing the Mosaic authorship of the five books in their present form to be clearly disproved by the books themselves. But Aben Ezra had evidently no aspirations for martyrdom; he fathered the idea upon a rabbi of a previous generation, and, having veiled his statement in an enigma, added the caution, "Let him who understands hold his tongue."

For about four centuries the learned world followed the prudent rabbi's advice, and then two noted scholars—one of them a Protestant, the other a Catholic—revived his idea. Carlstadt was, for this and other troublesome ideas, suppressed with the applause of the Protestant Church, and the book of Maes was placed by the older Church on the *Index*. The new truth appeared but dimly here and there until the middle of the next century, when Hobbes in his *Leviathan*, and La Peyrère in his *Preadamites*, took it up and developed it still further. The result came speedily. Hobbes, for this and other sins, was put under the ban, even by the political party which sorely needed him, and was regarded generally as an outset; while La Peyrère, for this and other heresies, was thrown into prison by the Grand Vicar of Mechlin, and kept there until he fully retracted; his book was refuted by seven theologians within a year after its appearance, and within a generation thirty-six elaborate answers to it had appeared. The Parliament of Paris ordered it to be burned by the hangman.

In 1670 came an utterance vastly more important, by a man far greater than any of these—the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* of Spinoza. Reverently but firmly he went much more deeply into the subject. Suggesting new arguments and recasting the old, he summed up with judicial fairness, and showed that Moses could not have been the author of the Pentateuch in the form then existing; that there had been glosses and revisions; that the biblical books had grown up as a literature; that, though great truths are to be found in them, and they are to be regarded as a divine revelation, the old claims of inerrancy for them cannot be maintained; that in studying them men had been misled by mistaking human conceptions for divine meanings; that, while prophets have been inspired, the prophetic faculty has not been the dowry of the Jewish people alone; that to look for exact knowledge of natural and spiritual phenomena in the sacred books is an utter mistake; and that the narratives of the Old and New Testaments, while they surpass those of profane history, differ among themselves not only in literary merit, but in the value of the doctrines they inculcate. As to the authorship of the Pentateuch, he arrived at the conclusion that it was written long after Moses, but that Moses may have written some books from which it was compiled. Spinoza then went on to throw light into some other books of the Old and New Testaments, and added two general statements which have proved exceedingly serviceable; for they contain the germs of all modern broad churchmanship, and the first of them gave the formula which was destined in our own time to save to the Anglican Church a large number of her noblest sons. This was that "sacred Scripture contains incorruptible"; the second was that "error in speculative doctrine is not impious."

Spinoza was, for this work, and for the earlier expression of some of the opinions it contained, abhorred as a heretic both by Jews and Christians: from the synagogue he was cut off by a public curse, and in the Church he was regarded as in some sort a forerunner of Antichrist. But the ideas of Spinoza at last secured recognition. They had sunk deeply into the hearts and minds of various leaders of thought, and, most important of all,

into the heart and mind of Lessing; he brought them to bear in his treatise on the *Education of the World*, as well as in his drama, *Nathan the Wise*, and both these works have spoken with power to every generation since.

—*Popular Science Monthly*. ANDREW D. WHITE.

## IN THE BEGINNING.

"ONCE on a time," in a certain locality—  
And the date will be doubted by few—  
A singular God with a spice of plurality,  
The changeless, unknowable, well-known totality  
Of fatuous wisdom and holy rascality,  
Thought he'd like to have something to do.

Prior to "once on a time," this divinity  
Had spontaneously managed to grow,  
In some part of space, or at least its vicinity,  
From "nothing to speak of," to three of the Trinity—  
A firm in which many perceive an affinity  
To a "sort of something," you know.

Tired of his somewhat protracted passivity,  
He determined to work, for a change;  
But just as a boulder bounds down a declivity,  
He, novice-like, bustled with heedless activity,  
And evidenced all a beginner's proclivity  
For experiments foolish and strange.

God had been living in total obscurity,  
So the first thing he made was the light;  
For, though in the dark he could see through futurity,  
He wanted a light to construct with security,  
And give to his figures such outlines of purity  
As would meet with approval at sight.

Oddly he fancied, with godly fatuity,  
That he'd fixed the round earth as a plane—  
Subjacent, and almost in close contiguity  
To stars and such trifles of twinkling tenuity—  
Upholding the firmament's wheeling circuitry,  
As the scriptures so clearly maintain.

Soon he exhausted, despite their variety,  
His designs for bone, muscle, and blood;  
But just ere he stopped through fatigue and satiety,  
Stark naked he posed, with the gravest sobriety  
(Remember, 'twas prior to sin and propriety),  
And produced his own image in mud.

God, with his breath, gave the statue vitality—  
Which resembled himself "to a tee"—  
And called it a man; therefore, God, in reality,  
Is manlike, has muscles, bones, lungs, personality,  
Blood, whiskers, and toe-nails—in short, animality,  
As displayed by us all—"he and she."

Life he created with wild prodigality,  
On the basis of struggle and strife,  
Whence spring, in their noxious but needful vitality,  
The pestilent virtues that breed "nationality"  
From personal, family, tribal brutality,  
The destructive preservers of life.

God, in a week, with malign ingenuity,  
Made a mess of sublunar affairs,  
Got weary, relapsed into former vacuity,  
Abandoned the badly-made world to fortuity,  
And left the poor tenants of earth's incongruity  
To attend to the needful repairs.

Such is the story of earth and its genesis,  
As narrated to Jews by a ghost,  
Which parsons (whose chief occupation lawn-tennis is)  
Tell all to believe, under horrible menaces,  
And threat'nings of hell—and you know what a den  
it is—  
So believe it, ye cripples!—or roast!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## ACID DROPS.

HUDSON, the man who brutally murdered his wife and children, and buried their bodies on Helmsley moor, was executed on Tuesday morning. He slept well until six o'clock, and then dressed and had breakfast, after which he spent some time with the chaplain. We presume he was ready for heaven when Billington appeared to do the hanging.

Here is a curious corroboration of a point in our recent articles on "The Bible and Local Veto." The Independent Order of Rechabites has just held its thirty-sixth Conference at Brighton. Considerable discussion arose on the rule allowing the use of wine in the Holy Communion. It was proposed to expunge this rule, but the Conference decided to retain it. The Rechabites, therefore, are teetotalers everywhere except at the Communion table. They break their pledge every time they drink the blood of Christ.

Chinese Missions were the subject of a recent article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, apropos of Dr. G. E. Morrison's book, "An Australian in China." It appears that the mission in Tongchuan was opened in 1891, and the results are "not discouraging." But very little encourages the missionaries, for, although the attitude of the Chinese is one of "perfect friendliness," not a single native has been baptised up to date. In Yunnan City a missionary has been laboring for six years, but "he has no male converts, though there are two promising nibblers who are waiting for the first vacancy to become adherents." There was a convert, a poor coolie, but he had to be expelled for stealing. In the whole province there are eighteen Protestant missionaries, and sometimes twenty-three; and in eight years they have converted eleven Chinese. That is, it takes two missionaries eight years to turn one heathen Chinese into a nominal Christian.

We say nominal Christian; for what is the character of these "converts"? This is what the *Pall Mall* says: "Money is poured out on them (the missions) like water; and the net result to date has been the 'conversion' of a handful of mission cooks and nurse-girls, foundlings dropped into the missionary compound and kept so long as they believe; loafers in search of missionary food, dipsomaniacs, and beggars, 'Rice-Christians,' and a promising assortment of ingenious thieves waiting for the first opportunity to loot."

In reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury's call at Croydon for rescue of Christians from the persecution of Mohammedans, "Sadek" writes a long letter in the *Croydon Advertiser*. He says that the cry of the heart-broken, degraded women, the woes of the drunkard's homes, and the bitter wail of the starving poor and of the unemployed, that rise unceasingly over the whole area of "Western civilisation," are things unknown in Islam.

In the last letter received from the Rev. R. W. Stewart, the martyred missionary, he speaks of "the many incidents which showed us that the hand of God was controlling everything." Pity the hand of God did not control the "Vegetarians," who, we suppose, were allowed to be under the control of the Devil.

Here, too, is Mr. Gladstone saying that, "by the help of God," the Turks must be taught to render justice to the Armenians. Would it not be better if the help of God came in to prevent the injustice and brutalities which rouse the indignation of Mr. Gladstone?

While there is all this talk about Chinese massacres let it be noted that at Sligo, on August 11, two Christian Protestant preachers were set upon by a Christian Roman Catholic mob, and it took two hundred men of the Royal Irish Constabulary to preserve them from the fury of the mob. Intolerance and fanaticism are not confined to the "Vegetarians."

The *St. James's Gazette*, writing of the Chinese massacres, says: "Experience has amply proved that, where Buddhism or Mohammedanism has passed, Christianity makes no real way." This is the most notable fact in connection with missions. Christianity succeeds against savage races, whom it exterminates. But civilised faiths like Islamism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Judaism, it assails in vain. The fact sufficiently stamps its real place among the religions of the world.

Dr. G. E. Morrison, F.G.S., in *An Australian in China*, says the missionaries show no results commensurate with the cost in human energy and in money. He says: "There are 1,511 Protestant missionaries, who have gathered into the fold last year (1893) 3,127 Chinese—not all of whom, it is feared, are genuine Christians—at a cost of £350,000, a sum

equal to the combined incomes of the ten chief London hospitals."

At the present rate, it will take, to convert a population of 386 millions, just 123,441 years, at a cost of £43,204,350,000.

These missionaries, according to their own account, are employed in doing what?—in sending the heathen to hell wholesale. Here is what one of them says, as reported by Dr. Morrison: "Those Chinese who have never heard the Gospel will be judged by the Almighty as he thinks fit"—a contention which does not admit of dispute—"but those Chinese who have heard the Christian doctrine and still steel their hearts against it will assuredly go to hell." This is exactly what the Chinese do, so the missionaries are an agency for making hell certain.

Mr. Curzon, in his *Problems of the Far East*, refers to the difficulties arising from "the constantly-increasing employment of women, and particularly unmarried women, by the missionary bodies." He says: "Only last year, at the remote inland town of Kuei-hwa-cheng, a friend of mine encountered a missionary community, consisting of one male and of twenty Swedish girls. The propaganda of the latter consisted in parading the streets and singing hymns to the strumming of tambourines and guitars. The Society that had committed the outrage of sending out these innocent girls only allowed them 200 dollars, or £27 10s. a-year apiece for board, lodging, and clothing. As a consequence, they were destitute of the smallest comforts, and could not even perform their toilette without the impertinent eyes of Chinese men being directed upon them through the paper screens."

The Missionary Flad, a German, writing from Abyssinia, says that King Menelik, who claims to be a direct descendant of David and Solomon, intends, after having conquered the Italians, to set forth to Jerusalem to free the Holy City. He asks the help of Russia, and promises rich booty to his soldiers. He thinks he will do this as easily as he carried out a raid lately against the Gallas, killing the men and making slaves of the women and children, after the approved fashion of his ancestors. King Menelik is a Christian, and offers a strong proof of how invariably Christianity carries civilisation in its train.

Although ablutions form an integral part of the Moslem religion, it often happens that cleanliness comes into conflict with godliness on the crowded pilgrimages to Mecca. Among the pilgrims from India cholera often spreads, and they are believed to be a means of its propagation westward. The pilgrimage, it is believed, opens the gate of Paradise. It often opens the gate of death. If they die whilst in the performance of the religious haj, they consider themselves most lucky, and believe the special favor of God has descended upon them in consequence of their visiting the Holy Place.

But in some cases they do not reach Mecca. The *Daily News* says: "The survivors of one shipload last year, after suffering horrible privations for forty days on the quarantine island, were obliged to go back to India without making the pilgrimage, and this is not a very uncommon occurrence."

Pilgrimages are so popular because they satisfy the desire for change, and minister to the atavism of a nomadic state when those wandering in search of pasture for their flocks nevertheless liked to return to the graves of their forefathers or the scenes of the exploits of heroes. It is a curious fact brought out by William Simpson in his pamphlet on *The Worship of Death*, that all the old temples are built on tombs, and pilgrimages paid everywhere to the shrines of the dead.

The Father Guardian of Pantasaph Monastery finds a drawback to the revival of Catholic pilgrimages. He says: "Branches from the pine trees, ferns and flowers from Calvary and the gardens, stones chipped from the rocks devoutly smashed to make relics, all are carried in triumph away." He announced that all such relics can be of no service to their purloiners unless they also anoint them with honey taken from the beehives.

Prosecutions of Seventh-Day Adventists continue in the States. In Mississippi, Colorado, Georgia, and Tennessee members of the sect who have persisted in obeying the Bible, and observing the seventh instead of the first day of the week, have been arrested, fined, and imprisoned, and a colony of them at Culverton, Maryland, has now been pounced on by their fellow Christians. The persecutions, usual, result in the spread of the principles of the sect.

Father Enright, a Catholic priest, asks: "What right have the Protestant Churches to keep Sunday? None whatever. You say it is to obey the commandment, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' But Sunday is not the Sabbath according to the Bible and the record of times."

This is indisputable. Yet Protestant ministers have prosecuted the Seventh-Day Adventists, who keep the Bible injunction to observe the seventh day, and also the injunction, "six days shalt thou work," for working on the day not commanded in the Bible; and the Christian State of Tennessee has now ten men imprisoned for this clerical "crime."

In the August number of the goody-goody paper, *Afloat and Ashore*, which Miss Weston gets up for the delectation and reformation of sailors, a sermon by Dr. Parkhurst on "Atheism and Anarchy" is inserted. Dr. Parkhurst has discovered a league between Atheism and Anarchy, and laments that "we still go on hanging the Anarchist, and saying little or nothing about Atheism and the Atheist." Probably he would give Atheists a short shrift and a long drop. But what is the secret? Anarchists attack the State, which can well take care of itself; but Atheists undermine the authority of the men of God, who levy heavy contributions on this world, on the pretence of piloting to a better one. Naturally the men of God think any prejudice useful to excite against those who would destroy their authority.

Count Leo Tolstói, says the *Daily News*, on the last occasion that he was summoned to sit upon a jury, declined to be sworn, and was mulcted in a fine of five hundred roubles. Christian governments all the world over punish those who consistently follow the plainest teachings of Jesus.

Stories of Jowett still continue to circulate. One relates that Farrar was once complaining of getting only £300 from Cassell's for his *Life of Christ*. "Three hundred golden sovereigns," said Jowett; "why, the other fellow only got thirty shillings!"

An Ohio preacher tells his congregation that "Chicago is the nearest approach to hell that we have upon this earth." This is about correct, since the aldermen have taken to making sumptuary laws; but, should any Chicago congregation extend a call to the Ohio preacher, at an increased salary, the haste with which he would go to the terrestrial hell would mitigate, to an extent, the superstitious horror of the credulous Buckeyes.

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes preached at St. James's Hall on Sunday. For the first time in their lives he and Mr. Foote were discoursing in different parts of the same building. Mr. Foote was in the thick of hard work on the following Tuesday, while Mr. Hughes was off with Mrs. Hughes to Grindelwald for four or five weeks. Gospel-grinding is a more comfortable occupation than preaching Freethought.

"An amusing incident," according to the *Methodist Times* occurred at the recent Wesleyan Conference. Two ministers in the Liberal Club lavatory put on each other's coats, and it was some time before they discovered their mistake. "These little episodes," it is said, "give zest to Conference life." How dull must Conference life be if it derives zest from such trivialities!

The principal speaker who opposed the admission of women to the Wesleyan Conference was the Rev. W. L. Watkinson. This gentleman is the author of a ridiculous book on *Scepticism and Character*, in which he endeavors to expose the domestic transgressions and unhappiness of renowned Freethinkers. Mr. Watkinson was facetious about women delegates. He spoke as a man to men, where the women couldn't answer him. But the cream of his speech was the discovery of a new argument against the participation of the other sex in public affairs. Some people might say that women were not good enough for Conference work; Mr. Watkinson, however, contended that they were too good. Their "delicate goodness and serene wisdom" unfitted them for the "strife" of such an assembly. How pretty! And how hypocritical! It must be a very silly woman who could feel flattered by such a dubious compliment.

The Wesleyan Conference devoted a part of one sitting to Lord's Day Observance. The committee's report on this subject, which seems to have been unanimously accepted, expressed delight at the refusal of the late Liberal Government to do anything towards opening the national museums and galleries on Sundays. It also rejoiced at the withdrawal of Lord Hobhouse's Bill in the House of Lords. Glad reference was made to several towns which had shut up all places of culture and put down boating on the Lord's Day. Finally, the Conference warned Methodists all over the country against the action of Sunday Societies, and called upon them to do their utmost in "defence of the Holy Day"—in other words, to keep it as the exclusive property of the men of God.

It is amusing to see the Churches slowly and reluctantly

adjusting themselves to modern progress. We have already referred to the Wesleyan Conference voting against the admission of lady delegates, although the respectably large minority promises in the near future to be transformed into a majority. We have now to draw attention to the solemn consideration of the telephone and the electric light by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in Rome. They instinctively hate scientific improvements, besides knowing that a display of the conquests of Science throws Theology into the shade. It is not surprising, therefore, that their decision is a most laughable compromise. The telephone may be introduced in a religious house, such as a convent, but it must only be used on "grave occasions." The electric light may also be used in churches, but only to illuminate the building generally. In all ceremonies of worship, whenever a light is prescribed by the liturgy, candles must be employed. Good old candles! Why not stick them in hollow turnips, and thus secure the requisite dim religious light?

The funny man on the *American Catholic Review* says of Huxley: "He is no longer an Agnostic; he knows now that the Christian revelation is true, and that the Catholic Church is the kingdom of God on earth. But that knowledge may have come too late to profit him." This is worth preserving as a sample of Christian humor and good feeling.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* says: "Our inquiries show that, whereas the Churches—except in two instances—were only one quarter filled, the theatres were in nearly every instance thronged to their fullest holding capacity." It concedes that the influence of the Church is declining, while that of the stage is increasing. It might have added that the Church largely holds its own by adopting histrionic methods and becoming a cheap entertainment.

George Müller, of the Bristol Orphanages, claims to have received, on an average, £21,000 a year in answer to prayer. Brother George never begs, and fancies he lives by faith. But he advertises the fact largely, and we fancy the advertisements are more efficacious than prayer.

Nothing like enterprise. A Jaffa hotel-keeper booms his business by appearing in *tableaux vivants* as David slaying Goliath. The giant having been disposed of, the lady lecturer announces to the audience: "If you want to go to Palestine, Mr. — will conduct you; here is his address."

Dr. Davidson says that he only goes from the bishopric of Rochester to that of Winchester because he is ordered by his medical attendant to get an easier billet. But the people of the Winchester diocese say they need as hard a worker as does Rochester, especially as he is paid a great deal more. But this question of cash, of course, did not influence Dr. Davidson, who had the luck to marry an archbishop's daughter.

In connection with Dr. Davidson taking up his abode as the Bishop of Winchester at Farnam Castle, it is said that the late bishop, Dr. Thorold, spent close on £10,000 on improving and furnishing the castle. A tenth of the sum would have maintained all the apostles for the whole of their lives.

Miss Müller sends the following to the *Bombay Times*: "I wish to inform friends in India that I am leaving the Theosophical Society. I have a vital reason for resigning. Further, I regret to say that I do not esteem the opinions of the leaders of the Society, and find myself unable to respect their methods of work."

Mr. Price Hughes has a Sunday show at St. James's Hall. Besides the oratory, there is the attraction of a brass band and a big choir. But, of course, this is not an "entertainment." If it were given in connection with a Secular lecture, it *would* be an entertainment! And the men who keep up this hypocritical law, entirely for their own advantage as public caterers, give themselves the most grotesque airs of moral superiority.

Says the Bishop of Salford (R.C.): "We have 278 religions in existence, every one appealing to the Scriptures, and declaring that they were founded on Holy Writ." He wanted to know what was the good of a revelation if, in its interpretations, we are placed at the mercy of every private judgment. Thus the Church sees, in the break-up of bibliolatry, an opportunity of once more asserting its own claims.

Edward Peacock, F.S.A., writing in the *Tablet* (August 10), says witchcraft is still a vital belief among large sections of the people. He says: "My own personal knowledge of a great part of two large counties, and information from trustworthy people dwelling in widely-separated places, justifies me in saying that the belief in witchcraft is still as firm a fixture in the rural mind as ever it was." What else can be

expected when the only pabulum offered the rural mind is that in the old book, which says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"?

Talmage says the first gateway to hell is impure literature. Why does he not get the Bible expurgated?

In the *Academy* for August 10 Mr. F. P. Badham gives some reasons for thinking that the first two chapters in Matthew were prior to Mark, as was held by Strauss. Alluding to the opening verse, he says: "An evangelist writing for Gentiles might well change 'Book of generation' into 'Gospel,' but the reverse process is inconceivable." He contends that the second Gospel has a distinctive style, which, had it been infiltrated into Matthew, would have shown there. The duplication of demoniacs at Gadara and two blind men at Jericho is, says Mr. Badham, corrected in Mark; but may it not have been that when Mark said "one," Matthew said "two," to make the miracles look bigger?

The *Daily News* reports that "instructions have been received by the Governor of Vladivostock to expel all Jews resident in that far Eastern entrepot. No time of grace is allowed to the expelled beyond such short periods as are necessary for winding up their business affairs and disposing of their immovable property and household chattels. There are several hundred Jews in Vladivostock, all of whom will be now compelled to return to their native domiciles in European Russia."

A church at Quakerstown, Pennsylvania, has been struck by lightning, and twenty of the congregation seriously injured. Divine Providence has also been manifesting itself in Russia in sunstrokes and cholera. In the districts around Odessa prayers for rain are daily offered, both in the churches and in the fields. No rain has fallen there for nearly six weeks.

Moody, the revivalist, says: "If you throw over Jonah and the whale, you throw over the doctrine of the Resurrection." For this the *Congregationalist* reproves him. But does not Jesus endorse it by saying, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew xii. 40)?

The Rev. Joe Cook got stopped by Minister Wills, at Honolulu, in the midst of a red-hot party speech, and walked out at once, with his clerical chin in the air. The *San Francisco News Letter* says: "The lesson will do him good. On his voyage to Australia he will be less inclined than usual to go out every night with his oil-can before retiring, to see if any of the bearings of the universe need attending to. Brother Cook is a very confident, loquacious, and impudent person; but in justice it ought to be admitted that twenty years of preaching in Boston without contradiction is partly responsible for his unpleasant traits."

Talmage's gospel-shop has several times been destroyed by fire. The last time was in 1893. On that occasion his wife received a great shock, which brought on nervous trouble, from which she has just died at Danville Sanitarium. It does not appear that Talmage is a particular favorite of Providence. Had these calamities happened to an infidel, they would have been "judgments."

A Madras paper gives a shocking account of the death of a woman in the jaws of a crocodile. The reptile went under water with its prey, but rose again in order to make its meal. It was then shot at, and the woman's body was recovered. "The muggler had evidently dragged her away by the arm, for that limb was fearfully shattered, and all but torn off. The face bore a terribly agonised expression, the teeth were clenched and the features set, in a look of absolute horror." We commend this to the attention of believers in Providence. It is difficult to see the wisdom and benevolence of making crocodiles to eat women.

A Catholic, writing from the Playgoers' Club, addresses us in this fashion: "No doubt you will curse me for troubling you with a letter, but I am cheeky enough to think that your article is not quite fair. I may be wrong—I generally am—but you're not right."

We really have no desire to curse the gentleman. He has a perfect right to think us mistaken, and a perfect right to say so. At the same time we do not share his opinion. He says it is not a fact that "the last supper that Jesus took with his apostles was seasoned with wine." Well, the word *wine* does not occur in the text, but "fruit of the vine" does; as it was passed round in a cup, and was therefore a liquid, it was just what we called it.

This Catholic gentleman sends us a little New Testament, in order that we may consult it and see that he is right. We beg to assure him that we have seen the volume before. Sending the Bible, or any part of it, to a Freethought writer is like sending coals to Newcastle.

One of our readers at Greenwich has received a begging letter on behalf of "the New Church at Heck," near Snaith, Yorkshire. Parson Bryan enclosed a directed envelope and a postage stamp for a donation. As our reader did not wish to keep the postage stamp, he sent the reverend gentleman a copy of the *Freethinker* in his own envelope. We don't know whether there was any weeping and wailing at Heck, but we dare say there was some gnashing of teeth.

Dr. Donald Macleod, speaking in connection with a fancy bazaar at Rothesay, said that Scotland was drifting too much into pure voluntarism. Seat-letting was all very well, but it made the Church the property of the seat-holders. What he proposed was "increased endowments." Quite so. The churches have always found that they flourished best on dead men's money. Yet they refuse to let Secular Societies receive endowments or hold any sort of property.

Professor Monier Williams suggests a fresh explanation of the "missionary massacres" in China. He thinks the Vegetarians are a band of fanatical Buddhists who regard flesh-eating as a crime. Professor Williams says he has met with the same bitter feeling against meat-eaters in his travels in India. If this explanation is correct, the murdered missionaries have paid the penalty of their New Testament principle of "kill and eat."

Rev. Robert Meares, minister of the second Presbyterian Church, Cookstown, County Tyrone, has been arrested on a charge of criminally assaulting Bridget McConaghy, a young domestic servant. Of course the reverend gentleman may be able to establish his innocence. If he does not, it will be bad for the Bible. Men of God are likely to feel the promptings of what they call "the flesh" if they happen to read the story of King David and his peculiar warming-pan.

## ALL DAYS HOLY.

EVERY day, from the rosy babyhood of dawn till wrinkled and weary it falls forever asleep in the soft arms of the night, is a sacred day, if around its busy hours has twined a garland of kindly thoughts; if it wears on its still breast the white lily of one loving deed. The flowers of kindness shall never fade. In every day of the world's to-morrow that will dawn and die, they will shed their subtle sweetness in some sorrowing soul. The day on which we have overcome some fault made by habit dear; the day on which we have ascended even one rung of the ladder of progress; the day on which we have been happy, when the birds of joy and peace have sung in our hearts; when our spirits, like thistle-down, have waved through the corridors of our being; the one on which we have sorrowed and suffered and grown strong through suffering; the days free from envy, selfishness, slander, revenge, and hate; the one filled with high-born thoughts, duties performed, aspiration and inspiration; when the horizon of universal life, reflecting our own hearts, seems to be already glowing with the roses of universal love; when the spirit, slipping from its carnal chains, forgetting the limitations of being, floats on the waves of infinite possibilities—are sacred days. They are living jewels set in the golden band of time; they are luminous, shining with human exaltation, and reflecting images of the divine. Should not all days be sacred? Time is so precious that every ticking minute and shining hour is a priceless gem, to be rimmed by us with the gold of constant endeavor and profound meditation, brightened by wholesome recreation and needful rest.—*Bertha J. French.*

## London Secular Federation.

Miss A. Brown, Secretary, begs to acknowledge:—Mr. John Samson, 10s. 6d.; West London Branch, 10s.; Tottenham Branch, 5s. 6d.

## Obituary.

FREDERICK ENGELS, who died on August 5, at the age of 74, was chiefly known as a Socialist and co-worker with Karl Marx. He was, however, a Freethinker. His cremation at Woking, on Saturday, was conducted without religious ceremony, speeches being delivered by friends and followers, in German, English, and French.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, August 18, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, W. : 7.30, "George Meredith : Writer and Teacher."

August 25, St. James's Hall, London.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—August 18, Milton Hall, London; 25, Milton Hall, London. September 8, Sheffield. October 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh.—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 Eifra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. M. R.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

J. J. R.—Your little paper is sensible, but hardly well enough written for publication.

A. HINDLEY.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with our articles on "The Bible and Local Veto." We are reprinting the Bible Temperance part of the articles, revised and amplified, as a pamphlet for general circulation. Our promised articles on Free Trade in Drink will be published at the earliest opportunity.

W. FLEMING.—Thanks for cuttings.

H. B.—Mr. Wheeler returns thanks for the paper, which will be utilised.

C. W.—You will find an account of the early American Free-thinkers in Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. Among them were Ethan Allen (*Oracle of Reason*), Elihu Palmer (*Principles of Nature*), Abner Kneeland (*Review of Evidences of Christianity*), J. S. Hittell (*Evidences Against Christianity*), D. M. Bennett (*The Gods, etc.*).

PRESIDENT'S FUND.—Per Miss Vance: Well-Wisher, 3s.; M. Du Bois, 5s.; C. H., 1s.; C. Pottage, junr., 5s.; S. Alward, 5s.; E. Belcher, 5s.; C. Thomas, 5s.; John Trueman £1; J. Leiper, 5s.; T. Campbell, 3s.; Miss Hodgson, 3s.; Mr. and Mrs. Samson, £1; F. Martineux, 5s.; T. Batchelor, 5s.; Mrs. E. Norton, 5s.; W. F., 2s. 6d. Per C. Watts: W. Bailey, £1; J. Umpleby, 10s.

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.

R. S. PENGELLY.—Much obliged.

R. M. P.—Mr. Putnam cannot visit every place during his present sojourn. His time is mapped out until his departure for America. We fear he will have to postpone a visit to Thetford.—Thomas Paine's birthplace—until he comes to England again.

W. TREADWELL.—Your verse is all right, but Harcourt isn't worth any more of our space.

R. GARDNER.—Christian Evidence journals are never able to maintain themselves. They are always subventioned or kept alive by egotists or fanatics. We have never known one that was really worthy of existence. But this is regrettable. We should like to see a journal conducted by a sincere and reasonably polite Christian, with the object of maintaining Christianity against the intellectual attacks of Secularism. It might be worth our while to reply to such an organ; but we never have replied, and we never mean to reply, to the gutter organs of what passes in this country as Christian Evidence. Principles are worth discussing; mere personalities are only contemptible.

INQUIRER.—See Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds*. Byron was certainly not a Christian, in any honest sense of the designation, nor was Keats, and Shelley was a professed Atheist. It is a piece of orthodox impudence to claim the greatest poets as "all Christians." Shakespeare himself was clearly an unbeliever in the cardinal doctrines, not only of Christianity, but of Natural Theology—as it is paradoxically called.

B. TRENCHARD.—Dr. Martineau does not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ. He does not even call himself a Unitarian. He has written some trenchant criticism of the Christian documents.

MISS VANCE will be near the Regent-street entrance to St. James's Hall this evening (August 18) to inform late comers who happen to be without tickets where they can obtain them.

J. UMPLBY (Blackburn), one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, and a veteran of the Old Guard of Freethought, in sending through Mr. Watts a subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "I am surprised that out of the 5,000,000 people in London there are not sufficient Progressives to afford him a bishop's salary. Mr. Foote's work is more severe and deserving than Canterbury's."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—New York Public Opinion—Isle of Man Times—Birmingham Argus—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Referee—Morning—Für Unsere Jugend—De Dageraad—Der Arme Teufel—Freedom—Liberty—Sheffield Weekly Telegraph—Nineteenth Century—Rangoon Times—New York Sun—Blue Grass Blade—Philosophical Journal—Times of Natal—Two Worlds—Light—Progressive Thinker—Liberator.

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.

### SPECIAL.

I INTENDED to write at some length under this heading, but I am detained at the Law Courts, and must defer writing until next week. In the next issue of the *Freethinker* I shall have to make a statement of considerable importance, and an announcement as to the future affairs of our party organisation.

G. W. FOOTE.

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HUXLEY.

THE *Fortnightly Review* for August has four papers on Professor Huxley. The first, by the Hon. G. C. Brodrick, Warden of Merton College, Oxford, gives "Some Personal Characteristics"; the second, by Professor E. B. Tylor, considers him "as anthropologist"; the third, by "A Student of Science," "as biologist"; and the last, by W. L. Courtney, "as philosopher."

The Merton Warden gives some interesting particulars of Professor Huxley's last appearance at Oxford. He remarks that the beauty of his character consisted in being perfectly natural. "He possessed in a high degree that rare but open secret to which General Gordon owed so much of his marvellous influence; he was always himself, the same to young and to old, to rich and to poor, to men and to women; and had his lot been cast, like Gordon's in Asia or in Africa, he would doubtless have been the same to Orientals as to Europeans. He was frank because he was fearless; he inspired confidence because he was evidently a true-hearted man; his native self-respect was set off by a respectful manner towards others; his intolerance of sophistry sometimes betrayed him into undue vehemence in controversial writing, but there was no pettiness in his *odium scientificum*, and a pure love of truth shone through all his most trenchant diatribes, political or theological."

The contribution by Dr. E. B. Tylor is especially interesting. He notices how theologians discredited anthropology as "a study leading to unauthorised views as to the place of man in the universe," and dwells on Huxley's services, mentioning in particular the meeting of the British Association at Exeter in 1869. Close upon the end of his life Huxley did his best to promote the scheme for making anthropology at Oxford an examination subject for Honors Degree in Natural Science. Writing to Dr. Tylor, he said: "If I know anything about the matter, anthropology is good as knowledge and good as discipline." But Convocation thought he did not "know anything about the matter," and threw out the proposed statute.

The "Student of Science," writing on Huxley "as biologist," endorses the remark of Ernst Haeckel, that "he was one of the few investigators who had thoroughly mastered the whole range of biology."

Mr. W. L. Courtney occupies the longest space in considering Huxley "as philosopher." The essay is not very satisfactory. He shows that he repudiated both the titles, Materialist and Spiritualist, and he tries to make out that because he set the ethical progress of man against the cosmic process, which "has no sort of relation to moral ends," he was something more than an Agnostic. But since the cosmic process, on the Theistic hypothesis, represents the method and work of God, he was here pitting man against God, and might even be described by the Theist as an Anti-Theist.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THE St. James's Hall experiment promises to be a complete success. The Banqueting Room was very nearly full on Sunday evening, people being seated even on the orchestra platform. Of course there were many familiar faces present, but there was a considerable contingent of strangers, including a respectable sprinkling of ladies. Mr. James Rowney occupied the chair, and neatly introduced the lecturer. Mr. Foote was received with great enthusiasm, and his address on "The Use and Abuse of the Bible" was followed with the closest attention, and frequently punctuated with applause, which rose to an ovation at the finish. A few questions were asked, and a good-looking, smiling Hindoo made an attempt at opposition. A polite and reasonably-spoken minister said that he had listened to the lecture with much admiration and a good deal of sympathy; but he wanted to know whether the old Bible, with all its disadvantages, should not be kept in the schools until the better Bible of Humanity, which Mr. Foote referred to, was actually forthcoming. After the lecturer's reply to this question the meeting dispersed amidst a lot of handshaking and congratulations.

Friends going to St. James's Hall this evening (August 18) will please go to the *Regent-street entrance*, which has been specially opened for our convenience. The staircase at that entrance leads straight up to the Banqueting Hall. Some of our friends, last Sunday evening, went into the main Piccadilly entrance, and found themselves in Mr. Price Hughes's meeting. The look of disgust on the faces of the Methodist officials, when tickets for Mr. Foote's lecture were presented, may be left to imagination.

This evening's lecture (August 18) is on "George Meredith: Writer and Teacher." It will be very different from the lecture, with lavish selections, which Mr. Foote gave at the Hall of Science some months ago. It has been advertised in literary organs, and will probably attract a good number of outsiders. Freethinkers also should find this lecture particularly interesting. In the first place, it is something out of the common; in the next place, its subject, Mr. George Meredith, is the greatest living English novelist, a fine poet, a most brilliant wit, and a Freethinker and Humanitarian in the loftiest sense of the words.

The secretary of the Failsforth Secular Schools reports that, notwithstanding the heavy rains on Sunday, Mr. Putnam's lectures were a complete success, the school being full both afternoon and evening. Mr. Sydney A. Gimson made an excellent chairman, and friends attended from all parts. The collection amounted to over £15. During the last year over £50 has been spent on the school in repairs and decorations, and it is the intention, as soon as funds will permit, to enlarge the building, it having become too small to carry on the affairs of the school to the satisfaction of the committee.

Mr. Putnam lectures at Leicester to-day (August 18). One lecture only—in the evening. Local Freethinkers will have to hear him then, or not at all, so of course the hall will be crowded.

The farewell dinner to Mr. Putnam will take place at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, September 4, a day or two before he sets sail from Southampton. The tickets (4s.) are now on sale, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or of any Branch secretary. Mr. Foote presides at this function, and hopes to meet a large number of London "saints." It will be their last opportunity, for some time at least, of doing honor to the President of the American Secular Union.

Mr. Putnam's last lecture before leaving will be delivered in London on Sunday, September 1. Miss Vance is making arrangements for it, under Mr. Foote's instructions, and due announcement will appear in our next issue.

Mr. Charles Watts gave his third and last lecture (for the present) at the Secular Hall, Camberwell, last Sunday evening. The audience was large and very enthusiastic.

This evening, Sunday, August 18, Mr. Watts lectures at Milton Hall, when, by request, he will speak upon the question: "Does Death End All?"

Mr. Cohen lectures for the Battersea Branch this Sunday evening at the Park Gates. As this is Mr. Cohen's first appearance in South-west London this season, he should have a very large audience. If wet, the lecture will be in the hall.

Mr. A. Prosser Chanter, a member of the N.S.S., was returned as a representative of Godalming Parish on the

Guildford Board of Guardians. He has taken the place of a local Tory brewer.

Miss May Collins, a Freethinking girl of nineteen, is carrying on a discussion on the truth of the Christian religion, in the *Blue Grass Blade*, of Kentucky, with the Rev. President J. A. Williams, one of the best theologians of that State. To her contention, that the matter of the Gospels was involved in obscurity, he replied by saying it would be very unwise to decline to receive Euclid's mathematics because there were uncertainties about his life. To this Miss Collins replied that the mathematics of Euclid demonstrate their own truth, so it makes no difference whether any such man as Euclid ever lived. But the very foundation of the Christian religion requires that Jesus should have lived, and as the teachings attributed to Jesus do not demonstrate their own truth, like those attributed to Euclid, it is of fundamental importance that such a man as Jesus should have lived in order to establish the truth of what is attributed to him. The discussion is not ended, but as far as it has gone Miss Collins takes the biscuit.

"Theological Pessimism" is the title of Mr. Frederic Harrison's reply to Mr. W. H. Mallock, in the *Nineteenth Century*, and the Positivist certainly makes some good hits. Mr. Harrison repudiates the title "Optimist," and says: "If any religion is to be styled 'the creed of Optimism,' it is not the religion of Humanity; it is rather Neo-Christianity, or Neo-Catholicism, according to which not a hair of our heads can fall without the loving care and forethought of an Almighty Creator; all is for our real and ultimate good, even if it seems painful now; Virgins, saints, and at least two Persons of a Blessed Trinity are constantly at work to guide, protect, and inspire us; and, however vile or sinful we may be in life (hell being now practically abolished), we shall all live again in transcendent and infinite bliss."

Mr. Harrison, too, makes a good retort on the theologians, who, with Mr. Balfour, wail over the helplessness of man, the visionary nature of his so-called knowledge, and the infinitesimal littleness of his earthly abode. He says: "It is strange! For it is considerations like these which, I should think, were the despair of theologians. It is Divine Omnipotence, not Humanity, which has to answer this dilemma. Did God make us in His image, after His likeness, and yet we are such worthless, vile brutes? Did He, then, die for us wretched mites on this microscopic mote of dust, and all, as you theologians say, for nothing? It is very wonderful! And all this, you say, is to prove the infinite goodness of Almighty Wisdom! Such is Theological Optimism and its message of great joy to man." Well may Mr. Harrison say that "Scientific Optimism seems to me, on the whole, a more cheerful, as well as a more sensible, creed than the theological pessimism of Neo-Christianity."

Mr. H. Brockhouse sends a very sensible letter to the Birmingham *Daily Argus* on the subject of voluntary schools being supported from the public purse. He points out that this is opposed to fair play and common sense: "1st—Because Board schools are under the direct control of the people, but 'voluntary' schools are governed by small self-elected cliques not amenable to anyone, and public control must go with public taxation. 2nd—Because it is the duty of the State to supply secular education, and of religious denominations to supply religious teaching, each in their proper sphere of education. Secular education is a public duty, but religious education is a private matter, resting with the individual parent or guardian. 3rd—Because, if the schools of powerful bodies as the Established Church, Wesleyans, or Catholics, are supported by the public purse, you do an injustice to members of minor bodies, or no religious body, who should have the same rights as a Catholic or Wesleyan. 4th—Because the so-called voluntary schools are not truly voluntary, but supported almost entirely, even now, out of the Imperial Exchequer."

The prosecution of Freethinkers for blasphemy in Sweden has not resulted as the fetish men wish. One of them, the venerable A. Wilberg, of Stockholm, long a Baptist missionary, writes: "Never before has infidelity so daringly attacked the Bible, even in our own country, as at the present time. It is our duty to raise our voice of warning, especially to the young, not to suffer themselves to be carried away by the flood of infidelity that like a deluge sweeps over so many nations of our world."

The British Museum has acquired some valuable Gibbon documents, including the great historian's journal from 1762 to 1764, an account of his journey in Switzerland in the autumn of 1753, two journals of his tour in Italy in 1763-4, and his remarks upon Juvenal after finishing the perusal of the "Satires." It is to be hoped that steps will be taken to make these documents accessible to the reading public.

## THE CHINESE MASSACRE; OR, CHRISTIAN FORGIVENESS.

"A Conference between officials of the C.M.S. and the Foreign Office was held on Monday, and instructions were at once telegraphed to Sir Nicolas O'Connor, Ambassador at Peking, to demand a military escort for him to attend the scene of the massacre to hold an inquiry; and, further, demanding an Imperial decree ordering capital punishment for the offenders, and the issue of stringent orders for the protection of all British missionaries now in China."—*Christian World*, August 8, 1895.

"Conclusion of Armenian Petition Entrusted to Dr. Dillon. Is European sympathy destined to take the form of a cross upon our graves?"—Mr. Gladstone has answered this last despairing question, and his answer will, we hope, rouse the Christian world. To think otherwise would be sheer infidelity, the denial of all moral power to the religion of Jesus."—*Ibid.*

WORDS like these are always significant to the Freethinker, and should be suggestive to all Christians not steeped in prejudice. These occasions form our opportunity for plainly exposing the ignorance and deception of orthodoxy. We take Christians on their ground of appealing to the "Word of God" as their authority, attested, as they say, by the "Spirit." By the way, this spirit must be very vague in its teaching when we notice that Christianity is divided and subdivided to such a great extent, even exhibiting this lack of unity in its foreign missions. However, as some of us know, to our cost, Christians are unanimous on one question—the persecution of "infidels," and here they are Turks and Chinese. Shade of Jesus! It seems incredible that the above quotations should coexist with the Sermon on the Mount. It is evident that in this boasted enlightened age those professing discipleship to the Nazarene are either dupes or hypocrites *in excelsis*. What do they mean when *praying* "as we forgive them that trespass against us"? Can any intelligent reader of the New Testament conceive of Jesus attending a "conference" between the Roman officials and his disciples, and "instructions" being at once sent to have Herod put to death for the murder of John the Baptist; or Peter taking part in a similar affair and "demanding" Herod's life for the murder of James? Candidly, though, is it too much to ask (assuming these persons ever lived) whether they would *not* if they could?—Times *have* changed! But this is not a question for a Christian to ask. She or he is bound by "belief" to obey the "word of God."

Presuming all Christians possess knowledge of the existence of the Sermon on the Mount and its corollaries scattered in the Gospels, we have only too good reason for believing the majority are unaware of its character in detail. The "men of God," except a very small minority, evade the matter. As far as we are aware, with the exception of Tolstoi the Russian, this minority "explains" the teaching away. It is far from our intention to vindicate these ultra-altruistic teachings of Jesus, but we plead strongly for honesty and justice. Those calling themselves Christians should act up to the profession, or candidly admit their inability and resign. Instead of which, they dub as "infidels" those who are honest enough to renounce allegiance to this impossible religion. We are also eager to express horror at the massacre and outrages, and to sympathise with survivors and friends; but at the same time it is only just to express our strong disapproval of orthodox "heathen missions." Their history shows plainly that the intrusion of an incomprehensible and absurd religious system, combined with a lamentable inaptitude to reconciliation with immemorial and proper manners and customs, has naturally resulted in disaster. How would "Christian England" like bands of foreigners insinuating their (to us) out-of-place notions and practices? The experience of the Moslem establishment in Liverpool is sufficient answer.

It is only fair to notice the letter of a Mr. Lloyd, missionary, in the *Daily News* of the same date, who deprecates the idea of reprisal. This is admirable from a New Testament standpoint; but why does not Mr. Lloyd carry the protest to its logical conclusion and sever his connection (with its individual responsibility) with a party which violates an essential of duty, and whose existence well-nigh destroys all sense of truth in this and other countries? He would then be at liberty to tackle the other essentials of New Testament Christianity, and seeing the utter impossibility of their performance, would inevitably renounce the profession.

Our contemporary may smile at the difficulty raised, and refer us to the long list of "worthies and divines" who have "satisfactorily explained" the Sermon on the Mount. We answer, such tricking, dodging, and evasion don't go down with a Freethinker in these days. The teaching is there, and it is the Christian's simple duty to obey.

"Sheer infidelity" consists of contradiction to the letter and spirit of this teaching; and, since we know it cannot be practised, Christianity does not exist; therefore, to talk of its moral power is absurd. Whatever of moral power may be connected with British civilisation seems ineffective when dealing with crime at home and abroad; and secular "providence," in the shape of "military escort, official inquiry, capital punishment, etc.," is relied on, to the practical exclusion of him who is declared to have said: "Lo, I am with you always."

We hope the time is not far distant when thoughtless, superficially-minded persons will be compelled, by the spread of Freethought, to look this matter in the face, and have the choice of deliberate hypocrisy or renunciation of an impossible religion.

JOS. G. BRIGGS.

## MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

*Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (July 20).*

How much I have to write about this week—Edinburgh, Abbotsford, Melrose, Glasgow, Ayr, Loch Katrine, and Loch Lomond. What a procession passes through the mind, majestic, beautiful, fairylike, that cannot vanish from the halls of memory, and glorifying this wonderful human life of ours.

For grandeur I do think the city of Edinburgh wears the palm; it is lovely, it is ancient, it is romantic; and other cities are so likewise; but where, in the heart of a vast metropolis, is beheld such a mighty castle towering on such a mighty hill? Two hundred trains rattle by it every day. The foliaged valley glitters beneath, edged by the busiest thoroughfare of the city, Princess-street. The Castle seems like some giant of the past, huge and battered, reclining with a kind of imperious disdain of the new life that surges at the feet of its dead empire, an enormous relic of the embattled ages.

On Monday morning, June 17, in company with Mr. Brown, president of the Secular Society of Edinburgh, and Mr. Dewar, Jr., I climb the precipitous eminence. As I enter the parade-ground the Highland regiment is at drill, with the music of the bagpipes. The costume is picturesque, and the marching ranks present an animated spectacle, with a dash of old-time war emblazonry. I enter the frowning portals, and wander through the halls, chambers, passages, and dungeons of this memorable stronghold. I look upon the kings' regalia, the swords and armor of celebrated warriors, the great gun built in 1486—a ragged-looking monster compared with the polished and gorgeous emissaries of death we now manufacture—and the tattered banners, in whose silken folds were once the fall and rise of kingdoms.

Time will not permit the enumeration of the hundreds of mementos that adorn this grim sentinel of the ages. From the castle I take my way to Holyrood Palace, at the other end of the long, descending street called High-street and Canongate. I pass St. Giles Cathedral, where John Knox preached, and the house in which he lived, gloomy as his own religion. I did not care to go in and view the remembrances of his fanatical career; I have no love for that theological termagant, who, if he had been a woman, would no doubt have enjoyed the Puritanic ducking-stool. Holyrood, however, is a poetic place, witnessing in its decaying grandeur to the tragedies of kings and queens. Especially is the brilliant and sorrowful life of Mary mingled with these palatial remnants. The bare walls of the old abbey are all that is now left of that structure in which the beautiful queen was married to the unworthy Darnley, whence began those cruel misfortunes which, crushing to death, have lifted her name into the immortal romance of history, where love and pity forget error and weakness. The dark and terrible crimes of those tumultuous days have left their record athwart the walls and floors of Holyrood, and we traverse the footsteps of royal murder and conspiracy. In the sunlight of to-day float the dim tapestries that might have drunk the blood and tears of centuries ago. Near by the palace is Arthur's Seat, a promontory-like hill, whence is a specious view of the city, and the vast surrounding country, now glistening in summer's green and flowery pomp.

In the afternoon, with Mr. Brown and Mr. Dewar, I visit the Forth Bridge. This is the largest and tallest bridge in the world. It is a mile in length; with three mighty arches it spans the waters. It looks like a triple mountain in its

symmetrical and massive sublimity. It is built for the ages. It cannot be blown down by any wind that these regions can produce. The enormous blast that tumbled over the Tay Bridge would not shake this an inch. It would require an earthquake to dissolve its stupendous frame. Its iron arms might hold a million tons in their clasp. We sail around the bridge and enjoy a full view of its piers, buttresses, and columns that defy the most furious storm. The view from the top of the bridge, which lifts its arches 150 feet above the water, is extensive and varied. The broad Forth is lined on both sides with wooded and mountainous shores gleaming near and far in the golden sunlight. We return by stage to Edinburgh, and along the route see new and attractive pictures of the city and its suburbs.

Tuesday unfolds a wondrous treasure house, Abbotsford, and Melrose. Melrose is forty miles by rail from Edinburgh. At the station the stage is ready for Abbotsford, about three miles away. We travel through a lovely country, the river Tweed glancing upon our vision with the same radiance that enchanted the poet's soul when he lived and loved on its gentle banks. Dismounting from the stage, we plunge down through a walled pathway into the delightful valley where the Wizard Scott built his picturesque home according to the fancies of his exuberant genius. We see the very walls he looked upon, the books he read, the window whence he saw, while at his task, the shining meadow and river; the chair he sat in, the desk over which wandered his marvellous pen, the little room in which he found rest at midnight's hour, the pipes he smoked as dreamland hovered about him, and the many treasures he had gathered, illustrious with memories of the past. The noble face of the poet—no canvas and marble declare the intellectual wealth of his gifted brain. How that brain teemed with the wonders of the world—a colossal power making rich forever the pathway of man. And Melrose, fair Melrose, I did not see it in the "pale moonlight," but in the soft and gorgeous summer afternoon; for clouds were in the sky, and a mellow lustre fell from the sun, and clothed the old abbey with a tender radiance; and the scenes all around harmonised with the melancholy beauty of the ruins. A graveyard is about the Abbey, beautiful with blue and golden flowers and a carpet of grass. I walked among these grey sepulchres, beside the grey walls of the shattered and mossy temple, plucking the flowers just bursting into bloom. The majestic past for the time possessed my being, and the dead centuries became alive and their glory thrilled my heart. I am glad, however, that I did not live when this old abbey was in its prime. I am glad that I have the privilege of looking upon its ruins, and wondering what its history might have been in the forgotten ages. I have photographed its picture in my mind, and its sad and sweet desolation becomes an intellectual joy.

I return to Edinburgh and pass the night at the home of Mr. J. F. Dewar, naturalist. He enjoys rural felicity if any one does. He lives in a farmhouse, old and solid as the hills almost, and surrounded with gardens, green fields, and beautiful trees. Birds of various plumage are gathered here, and other species of life interesting to the student of nature. It is a delightful place for dreams and reveries, away from the busy multitude. In the evening we enjoy the music of the violin and the piano and the melody of favorite Scottish songs. Mr. Dewar has for years been a staunch supporter of Freethought in Edinburgh, and at the last National Conference he was elected vice-president of the National Secular Society in recognition of his eminent services. As a naturalist and man of science he has no use for the supernatural. I enjoyed the campaign at Edinburgh. There is a fine society here; the audiences are good. The hall is well filled in the evening. Mr. Brown presides at the afternoon lecture, and Dr. Crawford at the evening lecture. Dr. Crawford himself takes the platform occasionally and speaks a word for reform, although occupied with the cares of a busy profession. He is associated with the great medical colleges of Edinburgh. The Secular Society has much local talent. J. M. Wheeler, Mr. Robertson, and others of renown in the Freethought ranks, began their work in this city. Edinburgh is the seat of learning. Over five thousand students are at its university. It might well be called the modern Athens. It is an ideal place for study and philosophy. Here is the tomb of David Hume, and his spirit still reigns in the schools, and even in the churches. With the charm of the past, Edinburgh has still the inquiring mind. The warm welcome I have received here, the many beautiful and grand scenes I have witnessed, make Edinburgh a memorable experience in this summer's journey.

On Wednesday, June 19, I take the train early for Glasgow, for now the Pilgrim would wend his way to one of the sweetest spots in all of Bonnie Scotland—the birthplace of Robert Burns. I met at Glasgow James McGlashan, president of the Glasgow Society, and Mr. Leiper, and they are my companions for this day's journey. Ayr is about forty miles' journey from Glasgow, on the Firth of Clyde. It is now quite a prosperous and fashionable resort, and has but little of the simplicity and rural quietness of Burns's time. The old landmarks are almost covered up. Tam o'

Shanter's Inn still abides, but it has a brusque and modern appearance. At the Plough Inn is the drinking-cup of Souter Johnnie, and some of the furniture of the cottage where the poet was born. They used to allow strangers, and especially Americans, to drink out of that famous cup, the source of so much happiness to Souter Johnnie; but now it is put under lock and key. It is too valuable to be handed promiscuously about. We can only take a look at it, and dream of its sparkling glory in the dim past. The birthplace of the poet is about three miles from the city—a low, long cottage. The poet was born in a little square corner of what I suppose was the kitchen. There seems hardly room enough in that bed for a woman to give birth to a child, but so it was that Scotland's greatest genius saw the light of day, and not much light at that, for there are only two windows in the room, one in front and a very small one in the rear, close by the bed. So the little fellow did not look upon a world of very great promise as he opened his eyes and the tragedy of existence began, mingled with flowers of love and flashes of wit and humor that will cheer to the end of time. In another room, which was perhaps the best room, or parlor, are relics and treasures of the poet's changeful life, his letters, manuscript of "Tam o' Shanter," etc. Among these, on a newspaper cutting, was "A Stranger's Tribute to Robert Burns," and signed "An American." To my surprise and delight, these verses, thus treasured in the poet's own home, were the beautiful stanzas written, I believe, in this very house, by Ingersoll—the sweetest tribute ever given to Burns from a kindred heart and genius. But it struck me as wonderfully incongruous that these noble lines should be "The Tribute of a Stranger." I was wondering if those who placed the lines here really knew who wrote them, and were a bit afraid of the magic word, Ingersoll; or did they select them for their simple beauty, without any reference to the greatness of the author? It certainly, in this latter case, would show a fine appreciation of a poem that flows like a fountain from the pen of America's most renowned representative. Burns and Ingersoll! how much alike they are in their broad and universal manliness, in their open-hearted recognition of whatever is good and beautiful in the humblest lot. He who loves the poet of Scotland must love the gifted singer of America, who breaks into melody beneath this lowly roof.

From the cottage we wander to Kirk Alloway, where the witches danced, and we stand by the window through which Tam o' Shanter looked and watched the show, while Old Nick played his liveliest tunes. Then we traversed the road along which Maggie did her level best. We loitered on the arch of the "old brig," where Maggie saved everything except her tail. An enthusiastic Scotchman was reciting the poem as we arrived, and the whole picture was placed vividly before the mind. We could see Tam as he whirled the corner and rushed down the road. We could see Maggie as she made that tremendous jump and won immortal fame. Beneath flowed the beautiful river, the river Doon, which Burns has so often celebrated in his songs. Dreamily we watched its limpid course; the green banks, the rose, the woodbine, and the trees glittering in the sunlight. At the monument are the marvellously life-like statues of Tam o' Shanter, Souter Johnnie, and Nance, and it seemed as if we could hear the very music of their laughter and see the humorous light dancing in their eyes.

Returning to Ayr in the afternoon, we went to the shore, where there are beautiful prospects of the Firth of Clyde, the Arran mountains beyond, etc. In the evening we are in Glasgow. With Mr. McGlashan I take a long ride through the city on a tram-car, and view some of Glasgow's most fashionable streets, its elegant residences, the Botanic gardens, the cathedral, the university, the tall chimneys, etc. There is much magnificence about Glasgow, notwithstanding its smoky atmosphere. The Great Western-road is especially attractive, with its noble mansions and lovely gardens. It extends straight as an arrow for many miles.

Thursday, June 20, is another eventful day. The weather is brilliant indeed; clouds and sunshine mingle in glorious array, and add to the attractiveness of each. The Trossachs tour is on this day's program, and it is crowded with romance from beginning to end. The splendor of Scott's poetry is over all this region, and we seem to be travelling through enchanted land. I take the train from Glasgow to Callender. Here I mount the stage for the Trossachs. We pass by the foot of Ben Ledi. On our left is Coillanthen Ford, where Roderick Dhu was wounded unto death. Then beyond that is the Brig of Turk, and Lock Achray, and towering wild and grand is Ben Venue. Then we plunge into the Trossachs' rugged glen, and, coming forth, Loch Katrine dances on the view. We leave the coaches, and are soon on the bosom of the waters, and the great blue mountains appear, the grey hills, Ben Ann, Ellen's Isle, etc. I am reading the "Lady of the Lake" as the boat moves along the wondrous scenes. I see the very rock where the huntsman's gallant steed breathed his last. I see the precipice which the bold knight ascended, the silver strand where the lady found her prophetic guest. Each glowing line reminds of the brilliant world through which I am

passing. The poet's genius glorifies the vast expanse. From Loch Katrine we take stage to Loch Lomond. Ben Vorlich and its companions lift their massive walls before our path, and we seem to be dashing into their rocky chambers. But from their base flows Loch Lomond, and on its fair bosom we pursue our journey. Ben Lomond rears its majestic crest, and crowns the vast and splendid scenery. It is afternoon now, and the golden color is shining along the changing heights and the fields and the valleys. It is a marvellous picture, infinite in variety.

From Loch Lomond we take train to Glasgow, and arrive at eight o'clock. Mr. James Baxter meets me, and we visit South Side Park, the Langside monument, on the spot where the troops of Queen Mary were defeated, and Camp Hill, upon which are some remains of the ancient Roman intrenchments. From this place there is a magnificent view of Glasgow. For miles around we behold the populous city.

I must thank Mr. McGlashan and other Glasgow friends for their generosity and hospitality. Mr. Leiper has presented me with some beautiful views of Scotland, which he has taken in his many travels as a matter of pleasure and art, and these will remind me of the beauty and glory of Scotland. My whole visit has been one of constant delight. The people are sociable and cultivated. They are patriotic, and may well be proud of what Scotland has done in the history of the world, in philosophy, in literature, and in Freethought. Scotland is progressive. She is not bound to ancient creeds. Her stores of romance do not chain her to the past. Her splendid mountains, her beautiful lakes, her fair fields, her shining shores, crowded with memories of heroic ancestry, are busy also with the life of to-day and resplendent with the triumphs of man's noblest genius.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

## BOOK CHAT.

IN a certain literary circle the knighting of Sir Walter Besant was being discussed, and by some disapproved. "Knight!" broke in a vehement Freethinker, "he ought to have been made a lord at the least." "Why?" was asked. "Why, for creating Valentine Eldridge in *Children of Gibeon*. The Lord God Almighty, with all eternity to work in, has not yet succeeded in creating half so good a woman."

\* \* \*

*Humanity*, the organ of the Humanitarian League, for August opens with a biographical notice of Francis William Newman, who has reached the patriarchal age of ninety. This is followed by an excellent article on "Humane Nomenclature," by Howard Williams. Walter Lewin contributes a thoughtful article on "The Making of Criminals," which ought to be read by every magistrate in the kingdom.

\* \* \*

*Light Through the Crannies: Parables and Teachings from the Other Side*, by Emily E. Reader (London: H. A. Copley, Canning Town, E.; 6d.), is evidently written by a highly imaginative lady, who describes life in other planets and on the plains of Hades as glibly as John on Patmos did the New Jerusalem. There is a Christian air about the book, and yet its teaching is not belief in the atonement, but working out good or evil deeds through metempsychosis.

\* \* \*

In Leslie Stephen's account of Paley, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, he says: "Paley advised his pupils, if they should have to preach every Sunday, 'to make one sermon and steal five.' He apparently acted upon this principle. His son, in publishing some posthumous sermons, says that only one is 'stolen,' but adds that three are said to be founded on sermons by Fleetwood; and a correspondent of *Notes and Queries* states that another is slightly altered from a sermon by Bishop Porteus." The famous author of *Natural Theology and Evidence of Christianity* said himself, "We could not afford to keep a conscience."

\* \* \*

Judging from extracts, Pierre Loti's *Jerusalem* is a very French and very sentimental performance. The plain, ugly facts about "the golden city" are veiled in much fine phraseology. The average Frenchman peeps out in what he says of Bethlehem. "The beauty and costumes of the women are the special charm of the place." Of one of these women, "in the calm and pretty attitude of the Madonnas," he says: "Now one would say that the Virgin Mary in person is coming towards us with the infant Jesus in her arms." The book should help the French pilgrimages to the Holy Land, but we guess the pilgrims will come back disappointed, not having viewed the scenes through the roseate *pince nez* of M. Loti.

\* \* \*

Mr. Stead deserves all credit for bringing out *The Penny Poets*, and we hope the sale will recoup his enterprise. But

his last issue, "Robert Burns," cannot be commended, save on the ground that to have any snatch of such a poet is worth the money. It purports only to be "Selected Poems and Songs," so we were prepared to find it open with "The Cotter's Saturday Night," and omit the characteristic "Holy Willie's Prayer." The editor was justified in omitting what was not to his taste, but not in altering words in what he did select, as he has done in more than one instance. To put "middle" for "midden" is over-fastidious in one who explains "houghmagandie" by "fornication," and d—d only calls attention to the fact that the word should be spelled damned. The first verse of "Afton Water," too, is divided wrongly. Mr. Stead calls this "The Masterpiece Library." The office boy, with scissors and paste, might achieve a better masterpiece.

## ONE WORLD AT A TIME.

ONE world at a time is all we can carry,  
All we can manage or hold;  
Then why should we seek, while on earth we tarry,  
More worlds than one to enfold?

One world at a time, with all its rare graces,  
Sweet as a vision of love;  
Its glorious showing of wonderful places,  
Fairer than any above.

Beams on our sight in its clear placid glory,  
A gem in white splendor set;  
Its pages record a beautiful story,  
Which learned, we ne'er can forget;

A story of joy and a story of peace,  
Bound in a volume sublime;  
Where joys grow larger and sorrows decrease,  
In one great world at a time.

No tongue hath counted the years that are given  
To dolorous fancies and sighs;  
Or told how wearily mortals have striven,  
On wings immortal to rise;

To soar far away to some fanciful land,  
In some rare and roseate clime,  
Forgetting that man can reasonably stand  
In but one world at a time.

One world at a time—although it hath sorrows,  
And fond hearts burdened with grief;  
Yet hath its seasons of joyous to-morrows,  
Bright with the buds of relief.

One world at a time—and its exquisite grace  
Flowers and unfolds in the sun,  
While in her dear bosom we readily trace  
The text and the words, "Well done."

Well done for us all if we would but hasten  
To catch its wisdom and weal,  
Its infinite strength upon which to fasten  
All that is lovely and real.

One world at a time—'tis all we can carry,  
All we really can hold;  
Then let us try, while within it we tarry,  
Our lives by its truths to mould.

SUSAN H. WIXON.

## PROFANE JOKES.

"What made Samson weak?" asked the Sunday-school teacher. "A home-made hair cut," promptly replied a boy in the front row.

"Do you think woman will ever successfully fill the pulpit?" "I see no reason why she should not. It ought to be easy with the sleeves she wears."

Mary had a little hen  
With feathers white as snow.  
The preacher paid a visit: then  
The chicken had to go.

Bright Boy—"Ma, you know the Prayer Book says Jesus Christ descended into hell?" Mother—"Yes." Bright Boy—"Well, our rector this morning read about Jesus saying to the thief on the cross, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'" Mother—"Well, what do you want to know?" Bright Boy—"I want to know how in hell the two could meet in paradise."

## 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.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "George Meredith: Writer and Teacher."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): Monday, at 8, musical and dramatic entertainment.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Conversazione.

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "Does Death End All?"

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Beautiful Bible Stories"; 7, C. Cohen will lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, St. John, "Religion and Morality."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Our Lord, Jesus Christ."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, S. R. Thompson, "Slavery." (Collection for Benevolent Fund.)

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, C. Cohen, "Jesus as a Teacher"; 3.15, "Is Belief in God Reasonable?" (Collection for London Secular Federation.)

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "Antidotes to Superstition." Thursday, at 8.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Christianity and Evolution"; 3.30, "God and Evolution." Wednesday, at 8, F. Haslam will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, H. Courtney, "Belief and Conduct."

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton, "Where will you Spend Eternity?"

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and Slavery."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Life and Teachings of Buddha."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Rome, Reason, and Revelation."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, S. E. Easton will lecture.

TOTTENHAM GREEN: 3.30, a lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, S. R. Thompson will lecture; 3.15, W. Heaford will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Fables"; 7, S. R. Thompson, "The Bible and Total Abstinence." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, Gymnasium class; 7, club and social meeting.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, L. Keen will lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Hammond, "Metamorphoses of Christianity."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. G. Taylor, "Private Ownership of Land a Social Wrong."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 3, members' monthly meeting; 7, J. L. White, M.Sc., "Bible Science."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Lecture or reading—see Saturday's local paper.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, adjourned discussion on "A Liberal Program."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BRISTOL (Eastville Park, Lower End): 7, J. Watts Treasure, "Christianity and Society."

DERBY (Market-place): 11, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, R. Mitchell, "The Atonement."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 18, m and a. Finsbury Park, e. Battersea; 22, Wood Green; 25, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—Aug. 18, m. Finsbury Park; 22, Hammersmith; 25, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Kilburn; 28, Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, E.—August 18, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 25, m. Clerkenwell, a. Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 15, e. Kilburn; 22, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

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Centre of Back to Elbow .....	Full Length of Trousers.....	Round Waist over Vest .....	Corpulent or not.....
Centre of Back to Full Length of Sleeve .....	Round Thigh .....	Round Chest over Vest .....	Short or Long Neck .....
Round Chest, close to armpits, over vest, NOT COAT .....	Round Knee .....	Round Waist over Vest .....	Full or Narrow Chest .....
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