

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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COLLAR THE KIDS.

RELIGION is the greediest thing in the world. There is no satisfying its avarice for privilege, power, or wealth. In gratifying this passion it has committed every crime, and resorted to every infamy.

Religion is also the most hypocritical thing in the world. It always wears a mask. Its designs are always covered with a pretence of virtue. It robs man for his advantage, oppresses him for his benefit, and tortures him for his welfare. And whenever it is found out in some exceptional wickedness, it acts like Macbeth to the ghost of Banquo: "Never shake thy gory locks at me! Thou canst not say I did it."

Like every other abstraction, religion must be incarnated to be effective. Principles and politics only exist in human beings. The incarnation of religion is in *priests*. This is their generic name. They may assume all sorts of special designations, according to the system or sect they belong to; but they are all one in essential character; their object being to rule their fellow men with the rod of mystery, and to exploit them materially by spiritual pretences.

These priests, these men of God, these mystery-mongers, these wonder-merchants, these traders in supernatural secrets, these holy tipsters, these fortune-tellers of kingdom-come, have the impudence to declare that their business is the most natural as well as the most important. They assert that man is a religious animal, though they are all occupied in making him so. They affirm that there is a necessary demand for what they supply, though they are always occupied in making or retaining customers. They cannot let us alone for five minutes. They dare not trust to free-trade and an open market. They obtain laws for their special protection; they have thousands of shops maintained by public capital, and thousands of other shops exempted from all taxation; they get into parliament and say prayers; they nobble the hospitals, the workhouses, and even the lunatic asylums; they station one of their long firm in every regiment and in every ship of the line; they almost command the universities, and they have also laid their hands upon the public schools.

This proves that religion is not entirely natural. It is very largely, if not altogether, artificial. Religion, indeed, is like the old medicine. The doctor's bottles were at once a fascinating mystery and the secret of health and longevity. But all that is changing. Hygiene is taking the place of medicine. We give fair-play to man's natural powers, instead of dosing him with questionable aids in the midst of bad conditions. And if we only give morality and common sense an honest chance, there will be no call for spiritual nostrums.

The Churches do not admit that such a state of things can ever exist, but they feel it is approaching, and this accounts for their desperate efforts to keep, and if possible confirm, their hold upon the education of children. Unless they can instil their doctrines into the minds of the young, they know perfectly well that their business is doomed. Early education decides the religion of the overwhelming majority of people on this planet. Whether they are Mohammedans, Jews, Buddhists, Brahmists, Christians, or what not, depends upon the geographical accident of their birth and training. We are all naturally men and women, but as religionists we are all (or nearly all) manufactured specialities.

No. 741.

We must expect the Churches to fight for their hold on our national education. They are impelled to do so by the instinct of self-preservation. Yet it is easy to show that their action is quite at variance with their doctrines. Who pretends, for instance, that the deity of Jesus Christ, or his miraculous birth of a Virgin Mother, is defensible on grounds of reason? What argument could ever prove an obvious man to be a disguised god? What discussion, what multiplicity of statement, could ever prove that a child, who had a mother, had no father? Such propositions can only be accepted on grounds of faith, by which we believe for reasons which are not reasonable. And how does faith act? Solely under the grace and influence of God. If he does not *move* us to believe, we *cannot* believe. But the Churches will not leave the children in God's hands. They preach *faith*, but in practice they rely upon *authority*. It is as clear as daylight that church pews are filled from school benches. The child is father of the man; if they capture the child they have the man for certain. Consequently their motto, in a possibly rude but certainly forcible alliteration, is "Collar the Kids."

Happily the Churches are divided, and herein lies the best hope of Freethought. Mr. Price Hughes admits that "the great majority of the English people are utterly sick of the ecclesiastical strife which accompanies every School Board election." He therefore proposes that Church and Dissent should arrange a compromise. Let all the voluntary schools—which are only voluntary in name—be handed over to a universal School Board system; let the Apostles' Creed be taught as well as the Bible; and let all Christian denominations unite in staving off—if possible for ever—that accursed Secular Education which would make children too sensible to be religious, and thus overwhelm all Churches in a common destruction.

Mr. Hughes launched this beautiful proposal at Grindelwald, at a serene distance from "the passing squabbles and partisan difficulties of the hour." How delightful! But alas! proposals have to be carried out in the midst of those squabbles and difficulties. A Frenchman may admit a German to be a good fellow at a distance; but not if he meets him with a rifle in his hands. Christian harmony, too, seems possible at a Grindelwald picnic; but it looks very different at home, where Church meets Church, and comes the tug of war. Mr. Hughes's proposal has elicited no sympathy. Everybody is against it. Nonconformists declare they will never, never, never admit the Apostles' Creed in the schools; while the Church of England party smile at the idea of giving up their schools, and inquire whether Mr. Hughes perceives any green in their optics. Cardinal Vaughan is so far from being ready to give up the Catholic schools that he actually proposes, in a letter to the *Times*, that they should be supported to the same extent as the Board schools, only out of imperial taxation; a proposal to which Mr. Hughes is warmly opposed, and which he promises to resist to the bitter end.

What a happy family they are, and how pleasant it is for Freethinkers to note that their unanimity is so wonderful! We hope this sort of Christian unity will continue and increase. The more certain people quarrel the more certain other people come by their own. In the end the children will escape from the clutches of the priests. The very "squabbles" of the Churches are hastening the triumph of Secular Education. "To this complexion they must come at last."

A word in conclusion about the Bible, which stays in the schools until it is kicked out. Mr. Hughes wants it "reverently used as the Word of God"—Jonah and the whale, and Lot and his daughters, and all. He does not want it explained away by Rationalists, nor used as a textbook of ethics while its supernatural sanctions are ignored or denied, nor "regarded simply as a literary classic, and degraded to the level of Shakespeare." Fancy degrading the Bible to the level of Shakespeare! It would be as easy to degrade Mr. Hughes to the level of Shelley.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE DECLINE OF FAITH.

MR. FREDERIC HARRISON thinks that we are passing through a period of reaction—intellectual, social, and religious, as well as political. If so, I should say it is but as the momentary withdrawal of waves, which apparently are running out even during an incoming tide. It is not by any glance at the publications of a single year, or the results of any Parliamentary election, that such a question can be determined, but by an extended survey of what has been in the past as well as of what is now.

The historical student, however much of a progressive he may be, will regard with little apprehension the alleged signs of reaction. Those with privileges to protect and power to lose are always more vigorous and coherent as danger approaches. Those who expect that a long-established and wealthy corporation like the Church is going to succumb, or allow any of its branches to be cut off, without a struggle, are doubtless living as much in a fool's paradise as those who think that, because a Conservative Government is in office, therefore Church Disestablishment is adjourned to the Greek Kalends. No one, it has been said, witnesses the death of a religion. It is a long drawn-out process of transformation under the pressure of new ideas. Yet no one who looks around can fail to see that such a process is continually going on to-day. The old religious ideas, as formulated in creeds, no longer occupy the place they held in the past. They are much less alluded to, and always with modifications and new interpretations.

A certain Nonconformist minister, who puts himself very much in evidence, recently proposed to unite Christians—at any rate, enough to continue combined control over infantile minds—on the basis of the Apostles' Creed. But there is hardly a minister of any education, either among Nonconformists or Anglicans, who fails to see that such a compromise would be disastrous. The Apostles' Creed is too palpable a forgery, and its doctrines of the virgin birth and the descent into hell too evidently mythical, for it ever to be made the basis of a new Christian defence. The men of God know that their interests rather lie in indefiniteness than in any creed, however simple and however generally professed it may be.

If astrology were as heavily endowed as is the teaching of Christianity, if its root ideas were inculcated in infancy, if all that ran counter to it were discountenanced by law, and all opposition tabooed as unsettling the very foundations of society, it would doubtless command a large number of satisfied believers. But a slight acquaintance with history suffices to show that the influence of interested professors is not what it was. There is more free inquiry, and less readiness to accept on authority, than ever before. Moreover, the clergy are steadily declining in public esteem. There are now so many more honorable and lucrative professions that only the old-fashioned, or those with command of livings, ever think of putting their sons to the black business, which was once so highly revered, but which now endangers its occupants being suspected of being either dull or dishonest. The Church only gets the inferior brains, and its system of training them is not calculated to develop ability—at least, as compared with the other professions.

The Rev. H. R. Haweis, in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, bewails the social and intellectual decline of the Episcopal clergy. He says: "The inaudible numbler, the sporting 'Dodo' curate, the lifeless drone, the weakling parasites who take orders, some for social position, others to fill family livings, and many because

they could not get sixpence a day in any other profession—these, of course, must be put aside as malignant, if not incurable, sores; no doubt they all help greatly to reduce the tone of the Established Church, but they are no new social evils. The real *crux* is rather to be found in the sort of thing the clergy are trained or even expected to preach, and the sort of thing the people decline any longer to listen to." Mr. Haweis certainly is not dull, but seeking to lead the clergy to preach Broad Church doctrine, while they subscribe to creeds drawn up in a totally different spirit, is certainly of questionable honesty.

One need not go back to the historic evidences of the ages of faith, when demons, angels, spirits, witches, and ghosts were as common as blackberries; one has only to read the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, or the Westminster Confession of Faith, and compare the doctrines there taught with those actually preached in the churches, to see that "the world do move," that supernaturalism is slowly evaporating, and that religion is gradually being superseded by ethics. No doubt the progress is slow, and its main hindrances are the existence of a class interested in the maintenance and propagation of supernaturalism, and the inheritance of wealthy endowments upon which they are sustained. But a class which is intellectually dull or morally blunt cannot permanently retain ascendancy over an educated people. Their very struggles and quarrels to keep their ground by imposing on the susceptible minds of the children will in time be thwarted by the efforts of independent parents counteracting their baneful teachings. Logic works slowly, but it does work. Teach children to think for themselves, and to exercise their reason upon all they are taught, and the dogmas intended to stultify their intellects will lose their power. Until the power of the clericals is broken, it behoves all Freethinkers to nullify their influence as far as possible.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF MIND.

THERE is no question in reference to which greater differences of opinion exist between Freethinkers and Christians than upon the subject of the nature and origin of the human mind. Orthodox believers regard the mind as a special entity in man, which uses the brain as an instrument for obtaining and imparting knowledge. Freethinkers, on the other hand, accept the word "mind" simply as indicating the intellectual part of our physical organisation, and they consider that its nature and power of manifestation depend upon the condition of that organisation. In my examination of these two opposing views of mind I shall purposely avoid all metaphysical conundrums, and confine myself to my own observations and deductions therefrom.

The definitions of mind that have been given by prominent writers do not, as a rule, assist the student much in the study of this question. Bain, in his *Mental Science*, tells us that the only account of mind strictly admissible in a scientific sense, "which must stand for a definition," is that which specifies the properties of such functions as "feeling, will or volition, thought or intellect, through which all our experience, as well objective as subjective, is built up." In a similar way, Hume writes that mind is "nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions united together by certain relations." Hamilton says it is "that which thinks, feels, wills, desires," etc. Many writers allege that the intelligence manifested by man is different in kind, as well as in degree, from that of all other manifestations of intelligence. But very aptly Darwin remarks: "Spiritual powers cannot be compared or classed by the naturalist; but he may endeavor to show, as I have done, that the mental faculties of man and the lower animals do not differ in kind, although immensely in degree" (*Descent of Man*, p. 147). Further, as this eminent naturalist observes, "a difference in degree, however great, does not justify us in placing man in a distinct kingdom, as will perhaps be best illustrated by comparing the mental powers of two insects—namely, a coccus, or scale-insect, and an ant, which undoubtedly belong to the same class. The difference is here greater than, though of a somewhat different kind from, that between man and the highest mammal. . . . On the

whole, the difference in mental power between an ant and a coccus is immense; yet no one has ever dreamed of placing these insects in distinct classes, much less in distinct kingdoms" (*ibid.*).

Metaphysicians have claimed that man, besides being able to perceive sensible objects, can also perceive abstract qualities of them; and that sensation is not like a physical nervous movement: thought and sentiment cannot be studied by the senses. Now, such language as this appears to me to be misleading, and destitute of any practical meaning. How could a man have what he calls metaphysical notions except through his senses? Before he can accept the so-called Intuitive Philosophy he is compelled to use his senses in studying its character. The conception of a circle or a triangle is derived through the sense of sight or touch. All ideal conceptions are the result of an appeal to our senses. I cannot understand how man can have an endowment entirely different from that of those animals with which it is admitted, anatomically, he is in every particular identical. It is not even disputed that mind and brain are either directly or indirectly connected, and that the quantity and complexity of the brain are in some way concerned in the degree of mind manifested. But can anyone reasonably suppose these to be two separate substances, having the power to act and to react on each other, and yet to possess no properties in common? Wherever we discover mental phenomena, we find it associated with functional activity of bodily organs. To say that man has two substances, the one spiritual and the other material, is only an assertion; and before such a claim can gain my assent each must be defined, and equal evidence must be adduced for the existence of the one as for the other.

It would be interesting to learn what mental qualities man exhibits that are not to be found in some degree in the lowest savage, or in the highest type of animal below him. The question is not how much better man can think and reason than an orang, any more than it is how superior intellectually a philosopher is to a ploughman, or a sane to an insane person. The real point to be considered is: Have we more evidence to believe that the thinking principle is located in brain matter than that it is the result of some spiritual entity, which exists apart from the brain, but that employs it as a medium for its manifestation? It is a fact, demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt, that the brain varies in different races of mankind in quantity, complexity, and symmetry, to a greater extent than between the lowest man and the highest ape; and the lowest type of the ape varies as much in brain formation from the highest as these do from man. There is ample evidence in support of these statements. For instance, a drawing of the brain of an orang and of that of man reveals an identity as closely resembling each other as the one known to exist between the anatomical structures of their bodies. But while the human brain differs enormously in size and complexity, man has no rational thought if his brain be below a certain point. Many creatures with less brain than man possess manifest great intelligence. They exhibit indications of having the power of designing and of purposing, which are the very features that are claimed to prove the superior qualifications of the human species. Darwin, in his *Descent of Man*, already referred to, mentions that the ants do most of the things that are done by man. They "certainly communicate information to each other; several unite for the same work, or for games of play. They recognise their fellow-ants after months of absence, and feel sympathy for each other. They build great edifices, keep them clean, close the doors in the evening, and post sentries. They make roads as well as tunnels under rivers, and temporary bridges over them by clinging together. They collect food for the community, and when an object too large for entrance is brought to the nest they enlarge the door, and afterwards build it up again" (p. 147). Darwin also points out that their cerebral ganglia are of extraordinary size compared with the less intelligent beetles, and yet they are "not so large as the quarter of a pin's head. Under this point of view, the brain of an ant is one of the most marvellous atoms of matter in the world, perhaps more so than the brain of a man" (p. 54). Huxley also says that "no impartial judge can doubt that the roots, of those great faculties which confer on man his immeasurable superiority above all other animate things are traceable far down into the animal world."

Even those who hold the "spiritual" origin and nature

of mind recognise that activity is one of its most important elements. How, then, can they conceive a time when it began to act, or when nothing existed upon which it could act? The eternal existence of both matter and "spirit" is therefore essential to make their idea at all intelligible. Universal matter must stand in a similar relation to an eternal mind that operates through it as brain does to the supposed soul. In fact, we can get no conception of "spirit" apart from matter, although the immaterialist would have us believe that the one preceded the other. Of course, every mind that is allied with a body manifests life and feeling; but these manifestations of themselves do not constitute what I regard as mind. Mind, to me, implies a succession of states of consciousness that have a beginning and an end. As we know it, the mind is the subject of growth, as is clearly perceptible in its development in a child. Associated with the senses is the power of thought, and all discrimination, comparison, judgment, however inefficiently performed, I consider to be absolutely impossible in the absence of the senses. Moreover, according to general experience, whatever tends to impair these senses always injures proportionately the power of thought.

The distinguishing feature of living matter, called protoplasm, is that it has capacity for organisation; but *why* this is so is at present unknown to us. Now I am not aware of any reason for denying to the organised form of protoplasm, called brain, the capacity to think, although we may not be in a position to prove how the process is carried on. Where is the necessity to go outside nature for an explanation of the one more than for the other? It is equally as self-evident, to my mind, that some organised matter thinks as that some formless, structureless matter becomes organised. To me there appears no doubt as to either; and to take the opposite view, that of an alleged "spiritual" nature of mind, is to encounter difficulties which seem to the unprejudiced investigator insurmountable. For instance, what is the so-called "spiritual"? What are its properties, and how is it to be differentiated from the material? Has it ever been known to act apart from matter? If so, when and where? If mind be an entity not depending for its operations upon matter, why does it not manifest itself apart from the organised body? If, on the other hand, it depends upon the human organisation for its working power, it cannot be an independent entity.

After much careful thought, the conclusion at which I arrive as to the nature of mind is, that it is not an existence *per se*, but a descriptive term relating to the intellectual part of animal organisation; that its potency is regulated according to the position in which it is found in living organisation, and the quantity and quality of the brain; and, finally, that, when such organisation ceases to exist, the mind (not its influence) ceases also. If we are desirous of accepting the theory upon this subject about which there appears to be the least difficulty, it will be, in my opinion, that of the Monist. This theory recognises both mental and material phenomena as realities, but not as independent of each other. Mind thus becomes a property of organised forms, the same as life is. We also obtain a conception of that which lives and that which thinks in one and the same being—Man.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

The Good Old Times.

In the *History of England during the Reign of George the Third*, by J. G. Phillimore, he cites the following (p. 261) in illustration of the low state of morals of the period: "The Rev. Mr. Patten was, during many years, curate of Whitstable, at a very small stipend, and used every Sunday to travel in a butcher's cart, to do duty at another church. Whitstable, lying close to the sea, is very aguish, so that, had he been dismissed, it would have been very difficult for the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom the living belonged, to have provided another curate at the same low rate. This he knew well, and, presuming upon it, was a great plague to every new primate. He kept a mistress publicly, and had that esteem for punch that, when his sermons were too long, someone, showing him a lenon, might at any time cause him to bring his discourse to an abrupt conclusion, that he might be at liberty to adjourn to the public-house."

THUGS.

WORSHIP of, or belief in, the supernatural often leads people to strange actions. Sometimes the religious spirit is manifested by complete abnegation of self, and a pious resignation to what is termed fate; at others faith in the unseen bursts forth in fierce fanaticism and perpetual frenzy; while frequently the measure of a person's piety is determined by the degree of his insanity. In the history of all religions there can be found recorded slaughters and assassinations authorised in the interests of deities or creeds. The shedding of blood, according to the Christian gospels, was necessary for the forgiveness of sins and the propitiation of God, and one of the greatest disadvantages that has accrued from this idea has evolved in the belief of many Christian propagandists—as evidenced by their deeds—that the continued shedding of human blood is necessary for the appeasement of the Almighty. A similar doctrine is present in religions other than the Christian, one of the most notable instances being in that of the Indian Thugs. About sixty years ago the *Edinburgh Review* contained an account of the peculiar religious observances of this society, taken from official documents, the publishing of which details caused considerable surprise and sensation, and led to the adoption of measures for the suppression of what these people considered their religious duties. Indian Thugs were nothing less than a band of robbers and murderers, whose ramifications existed throughout the whole country by means of a secret association. Murders were committed not solely for the desire of plunder—though this unquestionably influenced their actions to a degree—but from a sense of religious obligation. The Thugs believed in the existence of a god, practically an evil spirit—as is the Christian deity at bottom, if the contents of the Old Testament and the doctrine of salvation are to be credited—who, they conceived, could only be propitiated by blood, or, rather, the sacrifice of human life, as the Thugs were careful to avoid the actual shedding of blood, which was contrary to their creed. He who had committed the greatest number of murders was the most respected, being even revered and exalted to a position similar to that of a priest. In perpetrating these crimes they were diligent to avoid being betrayed into anything like remorse or pity, as this would lose them caste.

When they were young these Thugs served an apprenticeship to assassination. Almost as soon as they were able to wield their limbs with vigor they were inured to the sight of death, so that all sensation of fright or fear should be removed from their minds, and taught how to use the implements of murder. Having been given the best education possible in accordance with the means of their parents, the children were turned out into the world to plunder and assassinate for god and themselves. The way in which these superstitious criminals allured and dispatched their victims was very cunning and peculiar. They wandered over the country in parties numbering from ten to thirty in all sorts of disguises, and whenever they chanced to overtake or to meet a party of travellers, whom they considered they could overpower, they fell in with them as friends, sought their confidences, relieved their labors, and at the first suitable spot prevailed upon them to rest and partake of their hospitality. A meal was then prepared, and a time spent in conviviality. When the travellers were afterwards reposing from the fatigues of the day they were set upon and strangled one by one; graves were dug to receive their bodies with a "consecrated spade," and the marauders then proceeded to search for other game. By such means as these thirty or more people have been known to have been killed at one time; and the most remarkable feature of these occurrences was that the marauders were very seldom discovered by the authorities, so dexterous were they in the performance of their holy duties. The proceedings of the association were ultimately checked by the determined action of Lord William Bentinck, who had a few dozen of the assassins hanged, by way of an example to the rest.

Those who prate of the utility of belief in deity can, in this instance of savage murderers being prompted by religious motives, perceive something which ill fits in with their theory. It only requires contemplation, together with those incidents in the history of the Christian Church relating to massacres of heretics for the glory of God, to

convince the sturdiest adherent of "safe-side" morality that belief in the supernatural has more often than otherwise exercised a baneful influence over the lives and actions of men. "What won't a man do for his God?" Ay, and what crimes won't a man use his God to shelter?

F. W.

THE CONSPICUOUS ABSENCE OF GOD.

THE S.S. "Iona," bound for London, moving steadily o'er the dark and sombre sea, an hour after midnight on September 16, was about to become the theatre of a catastrophe, a tragedy, and a deed of heroism. The navigators at their several posts saw naught of danger. The mighty engines, obedient to human genius, throbbed and oscillated with a certain soothing periodicity which had doubtless helped to lull to sleep the unsuspecting passengers. All seemed well; but a sudden peril leaped like a fiend upon the unwarned ship, and, fiend-like, chose the weakest for its victims—the sleeping women. One of the first to awake was Edith Ledenham, the stewardess, who was seen hurrying round the sleeping-berths, awakening the sleepers. Afterwards she went on deck and gave the alarm. Finally, she rushed through the flames "to rescue a little girl who had been placed in her charge"; and the ship's officer, who related the ghastly search for the lost, said: "The last we found was the stewardess. She was clasping the hand of the dead child."

Where was "Almighty God" during these events? Where was the "Creator of Heaven and Earth," who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son," etc.? Where was this Almighty God whose power is over all his works, and the dimming of whose name into our ears provides thousands of clergymen with sleek, cosy livings, while millions groan and perish from agencies of distress and destruction not yet under human control? Where was "Almighty God" when the screams of the frightened women rang across the heedless ocean, without so much as an echo in response?

Picture that little girl roused from her sleep by the deadly crackle of the blazing cabin; imagine the pallid cheeks, the trembling, noiseless lips, the little arms upraised with a child's instinctive gesture for help, and then think of the eye of "Almighty God" surveying the scene unmoved; the almighty arm inert; the almighty will imperturbed!

But what God Almighty could not or would not do was dared and done by the young stewardess. The helpless child was not to look for succor quite in vain. Edith Ledenham was safe outside the burning cabin when she thought of the little girl inside, and flew to the rescue. Alas! Edith Ledenham was not "almighty." Had she been so, she would of course have stopped that fire before a life had been lost. She was only a poor working girl, and by the time she reached her little charge the heat and smoke had overcome them both, and the charred remains of the heroine were found "clasping the hand of the dead child."

Edith Ledenham is dead, but the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury still live, and all the parsons will continue to preach doctrines and dogmas which, in the lurid light of the "Iona" fire, are as wicked and detestable as they are absurd and contemptible. These priests would say—they could not help themselves—that, unless Edith Ledenham had been "born again," "washed in the blood of Christ crucified," and other allegorical foolery, her soul is consigned to the bottomless pit, in the fire that is never quenched. If this be so, who would not choose to suffer beside her rather than spend eternity in the company of the almighty fiend, who will use his infinite power to punish a lack of deference to himself, but will not use it to protect an innocent child in danger?

And what have you gentlemen of theology to say? To Mr. Gladstone we are often referred as to a man of pure motive and intellectual perspicacity, who is also a true believer. Probably he would meet the question with circumlocutionary phrases about the "impenetrability of the holy mystery," etc. Price Hughes! what would he say? "It is all for some good purpose, and God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to—"

Faugh! There are times when we can laugh at this

feebleness and fatuity; but beside the biers of the "Iona" victims we can only fling such folly back into the stupid mouths that utter it, and, drying our tears, invigorated by the example of Edith Ledeham's noble chivalry, renew our assault upon the senseless superstition that makes muddle-headed mountebanks of men, and throws a chilling and benumbing apathy over the grand human instinct of resistance to cruelty and wrong.

C. DEANE.

SEE THE GREAT MEN WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST!

A YOUNG man, not much overdone with faith, said to me, about a fortnight ago: "What puzzles me is that so many great men believe in Christianity." He was not satisfied that they were right; but their faith seemed to throw some discredit upon his own unbelief; or, at least, he could get no support for his unbelief from their faith.

I think I represent his position correctly, but shall be pleased to rectify any mistake, should this fall into his hands.

To myself this argument—if I must so call it—has always appeared extremely weak and pointless; even in my religious days I never used it much, if at all, for I very soon perceived its weakness.

Still, the weakness of even an old and ridiculous argument is worthy of new exposure, so long as it deceives any rational being. I think that is the point which should decide whether we, as Freethinkers, ought or ought not to attack an error or an argument. An argument which really has ceased to deceive may well enough be treated with indifference; but the very weakest that could be used should be an object of attack, so long as it has power to impose upon sensible people. An argument is nothing of importance except in its effects. It is its practical part which should decide us to attack its theoretical, and to expose in it whatsoever is calculated to mislead.

Now, if it were true, as it is not, that Christianity was the only religion which learned, great, and able men favored, I confess there would be much in that fact to impress me, if it did not convince. I should feel bound, on becoming acquainted with that fact, to re-examine my position, and to sift what are called the evidences of Christianity again, with all the thoroughness I could employ.

If I found the Christians the best and most enlightened people, and that the more enlightened they were the firmer was their faith in Christianity; and if I found Jews, Mohammedans, Hindus, Buddhists, and all other Pagans or non-Christians ignorant, unreasonable, intellectually dull, and more full of faith in their creeds as they were the more ignorant, I confess this would create in me a suspicion that there must be in Christianity something better and more logical than other creeds could claim, and something worthy of my respectful re-examination.

If, further, I found the Romish Church destitute of all brilliancy and intellectual greatness, while the Protestant Churches completely eclipsed it in this respect, I confess I should feel it possible that Christianity, as embodied in Protestantism, must be the most logical religion to be found.

If further investigation showed me that in the Christian society no bribes were offered in favor of the popular creed, no intimidation employed to defend it; that every man and woman was perfectly free to think and say what to themselves seemed best about any and every religion, and that no sort of persecution or disability ever followed unbelief or the open declaration of unbelief, I should be compelled to admit that this religion, so just, so fair, so liberal in its spirit, must have some truth in it, and be worthy of full and complete re-investigation.

Such is a view of a case which might have been possible, had things in general been very different from what they ever were. Let us, therefore, turn to the actual state of the world, now and from time immemorial.

(1) In ancient Judea, as amongst modern Jews, the most intelligent persons, the most respectable people, were and are orthodox Jews. You do not find, and you do not pretend to find, that the Jews who become the most intelligent and great leave their old creed and embrace Christianity. I presume that even the most presumptuous person or priest will not venture to say that the Jews

cannot equal the Christians in intellectual power. If only the ignorant remained Jews and the intellectual gravitated to the Christian Churches, I think the Christians would not hide the fact from any false notions of modesty.

Probably no Christian would argue that, inasmuch as the greatest of Jews remained Jews and behaved as orthodox Jews are required to behave, therefore all of us should turn Jews.

(2) The ancient Greeks could boast of intellectual giants who probably have never been surpassed in genius and mental power. They were our teachers. Where is the man to-day who, with no more advantages than they had, could have taught better than they taught? How many of to-day will be heard of two thousand years after their death, as scores are in the history of ancient Greece?

And yet there was not so much as one Jew or one Christian amongst those ancient Greeks! And the Greeks never became Christian until conquest and worldly self-interest and a broken spirit (in the un-Christian sense) made them so.

Must I adopt the Grecian mythology because Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Peisistratus, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, Hipparchus, Euclid, and many other intellectual giants, belonged to that old Pagan Church, as I may call it? The Christian will say "No!" and so do I.

I am not a Socrates, not a Plato, not a Sophocles, not a Euclid; but, however inferior in intellect, I know many things which were impossible for them to know; and I know the absurdities of their mythology, although they do not seem to have perceived anything wrong about it.

Similar remarks will apply to Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, India, China, to ancient Rome, and to the nations where Mohammedanism has prevailed. Go where you may, in ancient or modern times, you find the greatest men, as a rule, of precisely the same religious opinions as their most ignorant contemporaries. No matter how often a nation may change its religion, the great are always pretty much the same as the rest, and about as orthodox.

The social sentiment dominates and enslaves all but rebels and reformers—sometimes both are one, by the way. And we find in every case the great are as much dominated by the general sentiment as any of their fellows. Manners, customs, and early prejudice sway the most free and liberal of us for life. No man ever flung off all those shackles; nor is it desirable; for his countrymen would bound him to death for doing so. I can speak for myself, and say that, although in theology, in religion, I am absolutely emancipated from the prejudices of early life, in social matters every honest sentiment sways, binds, dominates me as powerfully as ever. Much as I have been and am persecuted, deeply as I deplore the madness of the people, I have never lost an atom of my respect for mankind; nor has my desire to better them in the least diminished.

I know the power of prejudice, the almightiness of sentiment; and I also know that no Christian, however great, has any better or more logical reason for clinging to his creed than Jews and Pagans have for clinging to theirs, than the veriest savages have for holding fast the notions they regard as sacred. Habit, custom, prejudice, early training, the social and domestic sentiments, fully account for every case of the kind.

Note that the greatest of the Greeks never wrote a great book in defence or commendation of religion—nothing at all which could induce an intelligent man now to worship Zeus, Hera, Apollo, etc. All that pious poets and others wrote of those divinities fails to draw out our worship.

The greatest Jew has written nothing that draws the Christians over to his views; even the Old Testament is a complete failure in that respect, in spite of its constant use in Christian churches. The Christians are equally powerless to convert the Jews.

Of the Catholics and Protestants the same truth holds. Here and there a stray sheep passes from one fold to the other; but the vast majority on both sides live, act, believe, according to the early bias they receive, and there is an end of it.

Let me add one word more. No great man ever wrote a great and convincing book in favor of Christianity. Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, Shakespeare, Newton, Halley, Descartes, Huyghens, Laplace, Herschel—none of them wrote anything in favor of Christianity which satisfied even the Christians who came after them, although some of them were ardent believers.

David Brewster, Michael Faraday, and the present Professors Stokes and Dawson were or are ardent Christians. What figure did they or do they cut in regard to Christianity? There is nothing from the pen of any of them on religion that is worth perusal.

If great men who are Christians wrote better on that subject than much inferior men, I should be impressed with the fact. But I will venture to say that the greater the man the more worthless will be whatever he is induced to write in defence of his religion. If this is not so, it is in the power of the believer to overwhelm me with facts to the contrary.

—*Liberator*.

JOS. SYMES.

THEISM.

As lowland folk, with ceaseless care, engage
To curb and dike the hungry sea,
A war with all the universe we wage:
All sleepless it; all wakeful we.

If we personify this loveless force—
Eternal, merciless, and blind—
We make a god's malignity its source,
Or stultify the human mind.

The universe is hard enough to fight,
Without capricious will behind
To circumvent, with diabolic spite,
The wisest schemes of humankind.

The god-idea fills the world with strife,
And makes the worst as good as best;
Its morbid dreams of extra-mundane life
Rob life of joy, and death of rest.

Can God be trusted, in a future life,
To change his ways and make us blest?
He's changeless; then, as now, will woes be rife,
And all that's bad be "all for best."

The present life, in which 'tis all for best"—
Though pain commences with our breath—
Is quite enough, so, thanks! we'd rather rest
In nothingness or endless death.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

CHURCH METHODS.

"GEORGIA has a quiet, harmless Seventh-Day believer in the chain-gang for a year for working on Sunday."

The above news item betrays to-day the methods which have been employed throughout the entire history of the Church to extend its power. Professing to serve the Prince of Peace, it has stopped at no crime which could be made to advance its interests. Now its purpose is to suppress those who recognise the teachings of God through Moses as paramount to an edict of Constantine; hence all the machinery of governments, which they have forced into their service in defiance of constitutional law, is evoked and set in action to put them down.

Synods and ecclesiastical councils declare that opposition to Sunday observance must be suppressed. State laws are enacted under whip and spur of the Church, when the prisons are filled with devout worshippers, whose only crime is disrespect for what they esteem man-made holy days.

Not only in Tennessee and Georgia, but in our own Illinois, the devil of persecution is incarnated, and is carrying on his despicable work. Four Adventists of Decker township, Richland county, were lately arrested and tried for violating the Sunday laws, and were each fined \$1 and costs, amounting to over \$100.

All these outrages against humanity for opinion's sake find their parallel in mediæval times; yet Protestants want the world to hold Catholicism only responsible for them. The spirit of persecution is always rampant in those countries where the Church holds sway, without regard to the sect in power.—*Progressive Thinker*.

Customer (in book store)—"I would like to get some good books on Faith." Clerk—"Sorry, sir, but our rule is to sell nothing to strangers except for cash."

ACID DROPS.

MANY years ago we met a blind clergyman in the train going from London to Leicester. He was armed with a sheaf of papers, including the *Athenæum*. We got into conversation with him, and found he was an American on a visit to England. He had seen Carlyle in London, and was going to preach the next day (Sunday) at Leicester. We chatted with him about papers and books and authors, and he seemed delighted. Of course he had not the remotest idea of our identity. His name was Milburn.

We presume it was the same Rev. W. H. Milburn, the blind chaplain of the United States Congress, who is now on another visit to England, and has been interviewed by the *Westminster Gazette*. As there is a salary attached to the post, we are glad it has fallen to the lot of a blind man, for we have an unspeakable pity for all who are so afflicted.

The chaplain's duty is to open the sittings of Congress with prayer. He never exceeds five minutes, which is kind both to Congress and the Almighty. But his prayers do not seem to be answered. Colonel Ingersoll says that clergymen ask the Almighty to do impossible things. Only the other day, said "Bob," I heard the chaplain ask God to give Congress wisdom.

The mayor of Avignon wishes to make the old palace of the Pope's there into a museum of antiquities, and has obtained permission from the Town Council to do so.

The French Catholics are afraid that, if they resist the tax on religious property, they will strengthen the hands of those who propose to suppress the Budget des Cultes, and, after some bluster, have decided to give up a sprat rather than risk catching no more mackerel.

The Roman Catholic *Tablet*, of course, considers the rejoicings at Rome, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entrance of the Italian troops, as "insulting to the august Head of the Church," and among the insulting manifestations mentions "the illumination of the British Embassy." It is satisfactory to read, however, that "the Pope has shown himself wonderfully calm."

The *Tablet* (September 28) places side by side two paragraphs—one stating that the Rev. P. F. Gleeson, D.D., priest of the Church of Rome, has been received by Canon Duckworth, acting on behalf of the Bishop of London, into the Church of England. The other states that Rev. Patrick Francis Gleeson was charged at Lambeth with being drunk. He was helplessly intoxicated, and was lying in the road with his face cut. Perhaps he had been celebrating his conversion.

Cardinal Vaughan's statement that there are many Anglicans prepared to recognise in the Pope not only a primacy of honor, but a spiritual supremacy, has excited a lot of controversy in the *Times* and other papers, and has led to the mention that there are several secret societies among clericals who are prepared to do anything and everything to restore England once more to Rome.

The Pope says it is impossible to speak of conciliation with Italy until all the rights of the Church are restored. The Vatican organs take seriously the project to buy Rome for the Papacy. The *Tribuna*, the leading Liberal organ, ironically asks what England would say if the Irish in America proposed to buy Ireland.

It is a sad spectacle to see a clergyman in a Revision Court objecting to poor men as voters because they had received parish relief. Such a spectacle was recently witnessed at Westerham. The Rev. F. H. Jones, rector of the parish, attended to do the dirty work of Tory election agents. Several voters were struck off the list on his evidence. At last the Liberal agent insisted upon the production of the Relieving Officer's certificate. This, however, was not forthcoming; and the Revising Barrister asked the parson whether he might not be mistaken with respect to the two persons in question. The man of God was "positive the persons had had parish relief," but it turned out at the adjournment that he was positively wrong. Naturally the Revising Barrister expressed strong disapproval of Parson Jones's conduct; his remarks, he said, would have been stronger if the reverend gentleman had been present to hear them.

How meek and mild and forgiving our adherents of the religion of peace and goodwill always are. Here is the *Daily News* saying the Turks are treating Armenians as Christian Europe cannot allow fellow-Christians to be treated. Lord Salisbury, backed by a unanimous public opinion, has sent an ultimatum to China to avenge the

deaths of fellow-Christians. Unless Abdul Hamid makes up his mind quickly, the next ultimatum must go to Constantinople." Not much turning the other cheek about the organ of the Nonconformist conscience.

A landslide in Arabia has resulted in the loss of one hundred lives. They were only Muslims, and perhaps the displeasure of the Lord was upon them. If they had not sinned themselves, they had, at least, inherited the sin of Adam. He doeth all things well.

At St. Katherine's Church, Neath, at morning and evening services, a large portion of the congregation and the whole of the choir took their departure when the preacher entered the pulpit, this action being intended as a protest against the suspension of the Rev. J. T. Hosbon, the curate. On the previous Sunday that gentleman had stated that he would not preach again, as the Archdeacon had insulted him.

There has been a scene at the Blackburn School Board, where Mr. Cooper, a Nonconformist member, accused the Church party of attempting to proselytise the children of Nonconformist parents by the aid of public funds. It was retorted that the Nonconformists attacked the Church of England from motives of jealousy, and stormy scenes ensued. The more church and chapel quarrel over religious education, the sooner sensible people will see that the State and public funds should be used to promote secular education only.

Christianity finds it easier to exterminate and supplant Pagans than to convert them. Even in America, where the aborigines have had nearly four hundred years of Christian religion and Christian rum, with Bibles, brandy, and the Holy Ghost thrown in, it is stated that only twelve per cent. of the Indian population are church members, and their membership would be uncertain but for blankets and other subsidies.

In the town of South Framingham, Mass., during a heavy thunderstorm, two elderly ladies of the Roman Catholic faith became so frightened at the idiosyncrasies of the elements that they fell upon their knees forthwith, and besought in prayer the protection of the Lord. They had scarcely thus manifested their trust in God and his goodness, and had not arisen from their knees, when a lightning-bolt knocked both insensible.

The New York *Observer*, a Presbyterian organ, laments that "the influence of Professor Huxley has been, and, we fear, will continue to be, pernicious to the cause of religion." How lamentable, too, that people continue to read the words of Huxley, while Candlish, Rutherford, Knox, Haliburton, and even Calvin, are neglected.

The Maories, whether they imbibed the belief from missionaries or not, used to prophesy the speedy coming of a millennium. The Hon. H. Meade, in his *Ride through New Zealand*, mentions that, "curiously enough, the prophet or leader of the last fanaticism, who foretold a millennium and a season of miraculous abundance of food and good things of all sorts, so close at hand and so bountiful that it was both useless and impious to go on planting or rearing stock, himself died of starvation in the woods whilst on a short journey." This prophet was evidently a more genuine believer than Prophet Baxter, who has well feathered his nest, yet refuses to leave any of his money to the poor on the day after that which he has predicted for the end of all things.

There is an honest boy at Coniston. He was found out in this way. A limelight lecture took place in aid of the Church Missionary Society, and the collection for the heathen included sweets, buttons, and other articles not particularly valued by missionaries. The next day the vicar visited the school, displayed before the boys the various non-negotiable articles found in the missionary box, and bade the scholars step forward and claim their gifts. Only one small boy responded. He pleaded guilty to a button. Let us hope his mother sewed it on again.

The Rev. Edward Oerton, vicar of Tebay, and a Justice of the Peace for Westmoreland, has been suspended for six months from the duties of his office for alleged improprieties with members of his congregation. It transpires that a private inquiry was held at Grange by the Bishop of Carlisle into the allegations made against Mr. Oerton, with the result stated. It is also said that Mr. Oerton has been discharged from the living of Tebay.

The Rev. Jonathan Crosland, late vicar of Kilham, Yorkshire, has been deprived of his living, and the Archbishop of York has taken away his orders. At Driffield an order was made against him by the magistrates for the maintenance of his late servant's child.

The latest statistics of India show that among the inhabitants of the country there is one convicted criminal to every 274 European Christians, to every 509 European Asiatics (the children of European fathers and native mothers), to every 709 native Christians, to every 1,361 Hindu Brahmans, and to every 3,787 Buddhists. Accordingly, as a matter of fact, European Christians furnish comparatively the greatest amount of criminals, and Buddhists the fewest.

To the Convention of the London Missionary Society a paper was sent over from Bangalore by the Rev. T. E. Slater, missionary to educated Hindus, on "Openings of Christian Work among Students and Educated Men in India." The writer said that since the days of Macaulay and Duff the British Government had nurtured two generations of university youths in India on the literature, philosophy, and science of the West, and also on the strong meat of English political ideas. So a powerful and rapidly-increasing educated class had been created. But, sad to say, of the tens of thousands who obtained an English education only a few became professing Christians. "Young India was impressed alike by Western truth and Western scepticism, and many souls were being wrecked on the rocks of rationalism, agnosticism, and intemperance." What a nice collocation! It is not the missionaries who introduce beer drinking. Oh, dear no. This comes from the Rationalists and Agnostics.

According to *Science Siftings* (September 28), Dr. Forbes Winslow, who states that "Jack the Ripper" is now in a lunatic asylum, says this notorious criminal was a medical student of good family, who studied hard and his mind gave way. He then "became a religious enthusiast, and attended early service every morning at St. Paul's. His religious fervor resulted in homicidal mania towards the women of the street, and impelled him to murder them." Such is the testimony of Dr. Forbes Winslow, who says the facts are known to the authorities.

Christian politics are occupying a large amount of public attention and newspaper space at present. The pressing question in ecclesiastical circles is the "star" system of preaching. The star system of dramatic acting is pretty familiar; provincial audiences ought to know anyhow, for the travelling companies that they see are generally composed of one "star" and a collection of "sticks." It is the same with the Christian Church, showing how close is its connection with the stage. Certain long-tongued cushion-thumpers are selected for their gift of the gab as special preachers, and they go up and down the country, practically giving entertainments, to call a spade a spade, by playing lingual gymnastics for the delectation of their auditors. The most successful "stars" are those who can best hide a grain of doctrine in a bushel of wind, and it would not be difficult to place the finger on a number of popular preachers who fill the bill to perfection.—*Crescent*.

A correspondence has been going on in the *English Mechanic* on the disagreeable topic of "Buried Alive." It is generally allowed that, owing to the laxity of death certificates, the danger is a real one, and that cremation would provide a remedy. The late Dr. H. Prater, a Free-thinker and author of *Letters to the American People*, left directions in his will that a surgical incision should be made in his arm before burial.

"Bibulous" writes to the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*: "I wish one of our city ministers would preach a stirring sermon on the iniquity of putting bad corks in beer-bottles. I buy my liquors from one of the most conscientious merchants in the town. His beer, wine, whisky, and brandy are all that the most fastidious could desire; but the corks— Not one in ten comes out whole. I am a mild-mannered man, seldom indulging in vituperation; but, after vainly trying for more than half-an-hour to take the cork out of a bottle of Bass in microscopic instalments, my temper fails, and then, as you imagine, my language is strong. Judging from my own experience, I should say that there is no more prolific source of profanity, and I ask the clergy to use their influence to stop such wholesale demoralisation."

The *Blue Grass Blade* chaffs Sister Frances Willard, of the W.T.C.U., on being one of the committee to bring out the Woman's Bible. Brother Moore says: "Sister Fannie, with whom I have done some little flirtation in Prohibition circles, will knock out that story about Jesus making wine, and about Noah getting on a high lonesome as soon as he could find a saloon after getting off the ark, but it would not seem fitting for her to want to swipe out those passages where Brother Paul advises against matrimony."

The Rev. Norman Macleod sees that cycles are breaking up the Scotch Sawbath, and he hopes the wheelmen will draw the line. He doesn't see any harm in a person riding

a bicycle to church, but at the same time he doesn't approve of Sunday being used as a holiday for cycling.

We see from the *Straits Times* that an English magistrate, in charge at Pekan, in the Malay Peninsula, excited much indignation by ordering that the body of a Malay, who died of cholera, should be burnt. The Malays hold that cremation prevents the possibility of resurrection, and the magistrate guilty of such an outrage will never be forgiven.

Such mistakes often occur in dealing with other races, and people are surprised that they show such enmity to foreigners, forgetting that the foreigners often outrage their most cherished convictions. Some years ago the Bible Society sent a large cargo of Hindustani Bibles to India bound in leather. Of course no Hindu would as much as touch the volume, which on its very outside reminded them of the slaughter of the sacred cow.

The Society of Christian Endeavor has had an undoubted success in America, chiefly, it is suspected, because it leads to a deal of sweethearting and match-making. The movement is seen to be a secularising one under Christian pretences, and it is breaking down the old idea of feminine subordination in the Church. Under these circumstances it is vigorously denounced by the Rev. E. Brantly, in the *Presbyterian Quarterly*, as one of the cunning wiles of the Devil, which leads "further on towards Rationalism, Jacobinism, disintegration."

The Baptists of Portobello have Sunday salt-water baptisms of all converts; but the proceeding of plunging the elect over head and ears amid the tumbling waves always draws a large and derisive crowd, whose laughter and shouts, according to the newspaper reports, are "scarcely in keeping with the sacred performance." We are ardent believers in the efficacy of this kind of baptism, but prefer to dispense with the services of any officiating minister.

Reynolds's Newspaper, reviewing *The Pilgrims and the Anglican Church*, by W. Deverell, says of the Pagans: "They persecuted, but with a leniency that sinks into insignificance when the bloody horrors which have marked the track of Christianity are remembered."

The Rev. A. J. Waldron has been delivering a course of lectures at New Brompton. One of his subjects was "My Debate with Mr. Foote—a Retrospect." Surely this is a curious proceeding. It would be better to let the debate stand than to have it over again—in Mr. Foote's absence.

We do not suppose that Mr. Macdonald, the editor of the *New York Truthseeker*, has been subtly bribing the editor of the *Christian Reformer*; but the latter gentleman is anxiously endeavoring to push the former into prominent notice. First he suggests that the *Truthseeker* comes within the provisions of the law against blasphemy. Then, not satisfied with this good advertisement, he writes: "We cannot understand why the post-office authorities of New York City, or the Society for the Suppression of Vice and Immorality, do not compel the publishers to change the character of the paper, or suppress it as an enemy of public morals and the nation's weal." The *Christian Reformer* is evidently actuated by the true Christian spirit, and we hope that Brother Macdonald duly appreciates its loving kindness. The prosecution of the late D. M. Bennett did a deal towards putting the *Truthseeker* on a firm basis, and the *Christian Reformer*, doubtless aware of this, is anxious to give it another lift by the means of that eminent protector of American morality, Anthony Comstock. Should the circulation of the *Truthseeker* shoot up wonderfully, we hope it will not forget how much it owes to the kind attentions of the *Christian Reformer*.

According to the *Church Reformer*, the Rev. George Brooks, Mr. Balfour's Bounty Brooks, the bankrupt, begging-letter writer, who keeps his horse and carriage, is the author of the attack on the Christian Social Union in the *Church Quarterly Review*. Was it for this he was rewarded by the author of *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*?

The Rev. J. Carvell Williams, writing in the *Daily News*, says that the clergy often demand high fees for burying in vaults, on the plea that they grant a portion of their supposed freehold. But, legally, no such grant can be made, and Mr. Williams states that, "as a matter of fact, some of the clergy, knowing that this is the law, show their hatred of Nonconformist services in churchyards by refusing to allow the burials to take place in the family graves which are supposed to have been purchased by the deceased persons or their predecessors."

"Surely, Mr. Editor," continues Mr. Williams, "it is a pitiful thing that the ministry of the Established Church should be in any degree dependent for their maintenance

on what are practically taxes levied on the burial of the dead, and which are sometimes illegally demanded also."

The Pope has been giving himself up to prayer and meditation. The only person to whom the Pontiff has thrown open the doors of his room of seclusion is Ugolini, the painter, who, in painting his portrait, has very discreetly avoided the reproduction of the Pope's distinct resemblance to Voltaire, one of his Holiness's *bêtes noires*. The German painter, Lenbach, having painted too faithful a portrait, "Questa è una volpe!" cried the Pope angrily, turning his back upon the picture and walking out of the room—"It is the portrait of a fox."

Dean Farrar, in the October *Fortnightly Review*, examines the "Asserted Growth of Roman Catholicism in England," and comes to exactly the conclusion anyone might have expected of him—that Romanism is becoming "more and more powerless, more and more verbal among the immense majority of the people, especially of the men," not only in England, but in the very countries in which it has "held for centuries an almost undisputed sway."

The rowdy fiasco at the curates' meeting will, it is hoped, hinder our spiritual pastors and masters from giving lessons on behavior to working men for some time to come. The *Church Reformer* says of the meeting: "Both sides ought to be thoroughly ashamed of themselves."

According to a paragraph in the *London Star*, the Gillingham School Board (near Chatham) has just voted on a proposal to rescind the teaching of the Apostles' Creed. The motion was lost by one vote, and that vote was cast by the Secularist member. We shall be glad to receive some account of this matter from Mr. Thompson.

Here is the Rev. Charles Harris writing to the *Church Reformer* (an organ which, under the conduct of the Rev. S. Headlam, has opposed the Blasphemy Laws) declaring that, "as Coke well puts it, Christianity is part and parcel of the law of England." The Rev. C. Harris is evidently unaware that Lord Chief-Justice Coleridge, in the trial of the editor of this paper, laid it down that that old dictum no longer held good, being invalidated by the admission of Jews to Parliament and to the highest offices in the land.

Mr. Gladstone has written and talked on many subjects, and it appears that he is now going to tackle the question of Immortality. It is said that he does not consider man to be intrinsically immortal, but immortalisable; that is, he may become immortal by availing himself of the redemption of Jesus Christ. What a pity it is that the question is still debateable after so much debate! Jehovah's revelation requires to be revealed, and Mr. Gladstone will try to explain it; but people are sure to wish that he would explain his explanation. Like the man in *Punch*, the world "gets no forrarder" in theology.

The British Army is becoming a very cosmopolitan body. It includes Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Mohammedans, Brahmists, Buddhists, and the Lord knows what besides. Lord Wolseley says that a friend of his, a colonel, has recently become a Jew, while another has become a Buddhist. We suppose they will all sit down with Abraham in the kingdom of heaven. But, of course, the non-religious soldiers—like Cæsar, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Peterborough, and Garibaldi—will be excluded. Well, it will be a rather poor muster without them, from the military point of view.

Obituary.

MR. SAMUEL STANDRING died in the Manchester Royal Infirmary on Friday afternoon, September 28. The funeral took place on Wednesday, the remains being incinerated in the local Crematorium. Messrs. Willock, of Manchester, and Howarth, of Rochdale, superintended the obsequies. A long and favorable notice of the deceased appeared in *Saturday's Rochdale Observer*. He was forty-two years of age. Mr. Standring was a man of active and enterprising character. In his lifetime he attempted many things, too often going beyond his strength, which he finally exhausted, beyond all hope of recovery.

MODERN PERSECUTION.—A man may be entirely uninjured in his body by the actions of his fellow men, and he may be entirely unimpeded in his movements by them, and he may yet be prevented from carrying on the activities needful for the maintenance of life.....No interference of this kind is possible without a breach of the law of equal freedom.—*Herbert Spencer*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 6, Masonic Hall, High-street, Wood Green :—
7.30, "Life, Death, and After."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—October 6, Foresters' Hall, London; 13, Foresters' Hall; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 18, North Shields; 20, Glasgow; 21 and 25, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh; 28, York. November 17, Liverpool; 24, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N., having been disappointed of a course of engagement in Scotland, desires to fill up his Sundays either in London or the country.

OLD DEVONIAN.—Pleased to have your good wishes.

G. HOLLOWAY sends his shilling, and hopes we shall get "ten thousand more." We should do so if our readers would all "rise to the occasion."

A. HAYNES.—Hope we have your initial right. Thanks for the Bromley paper. See paragraph.

G. ENNSON.—A good joke, but it has already appeared in the *Freethinker*.

W. CLOGG.—We hope to give some more illustrations during the winter. Glad to hear you like Mr. Putnam's account of his experiences in this country. We note your hope that "the rank and file, more especially the 'passive' ones, will support you during Shilling Week, so that when the winter is passed they may look back with pride at having helped you and others to lift the dark cloud of superstition hanging all round."

E. G. TAYLOR.—Thanks for the copy of Mr. Storey's letter. It was only natural that orthodox bigots should oppose him, with every device of malignity, for introducing a Bill to give Freethinkers the same rights of citizenship as are enjoyed by Christians. We hope to get a report of the trial of his election petition. Anything you send us will be valued.

C. LEWIS.—The Cheshire Branch, one of the poorest, is the first in the field with its Shilling Week subscription. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Chester before Christmas.

MRS. BESZANT, in sending four shillings, expresses "every good wish for the success of Mr. Foote's meritorious undertakings generally."

A BLACKPOOL FRIEND, in sending twenty shillings, writes: "Keep pushing on, but don't be discouraged if things do not go forward as quickly as you would like; Freethought is a plant of slow growth." We assure this friend that there is little fear of our being discouraged. It was said of one of the greatest of men, Oliver Cromwell, by an intimate acquaintance, that hope shone in him like a pillar of fire when it had almost gone out in others. In a humble way we aspire to emulate that mighty example.

HEMALITE sends the result of "Self-denial to aid Freethought."

T. DENBAR says: "I approve of your plan of propaganda, and hope all Freethinkers will consider it their duty to give according to their means." If they only do so, we will make Freethought propaganda "spin" during the coming winter.

C. K. DUMAS.—Mr. Edwards is quite right, in his *Witness of Assyria* (an excellent book), in saying that there is no evidence, except their own statements, that the Jews were ever in Egypt. Bishop Tomline's reference to the "shepherd people" is very misleading. There was a Shepherd Dynasty in Egypt at one time, but it was afterwards expelled. This has no connection whatever with the Bible story.

J. P. GILMOUR.—Glad to hear of Mr. Heaford's success at Glasgow. His abilities and accomplishments deserve a wider recognition, to say nothing of his zealous and modest character.

TOBY KING.—It was like you to send a shilling for every week in a year. We hope soon to have the pleasure of shaking hands with you again.

ALPHA.—Pleased to hear that, despite your physical infirmity and failing eyesight, you still enjoy your *Freethinker*.

W. A. NEWCOMBE.—As you say, the battle of Freethought is far from ended.

DANIEL BAKER, the Birmingham veteran, who sends his shillings for the new fund, says: "I hope there will be many of them. Glad to see you reported in such good health."

H. W. D., who sends fifteen shillings, says: "I hope you will receive at least a thousand more such sums, as I know there are many Freethinkers who could well afford it."

G. J. WILLIAMSON, subscribing, writes: "Though not a member of the N.S.S., I am a constant reader and admirer of your paper, and wish you every success."

E. W. W.—Thanks for cuttings.

H. A. CUMBER, subscribing to Shilling Week, writes: "I thought it would not be altogether absurd if I asked a few professedly Christian friends to subscribe, especially after Mr. Holyoake's contribution to the Salvation Army; but I am sorry to say I failed miserably." Of course!

R. VERNY, who is "only a poor working girl," but takes "a keen interest in the Secular movement," sends her mite, and hopes Mr. Foote's scheme will be a great success.

C. D., sending ten shillings, hopes "a large number of readers of the *Freethinker* will respond liberally, as well as many outsiders."

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Tottenham Branch, 5s. 8d.; Bethnal Green Branch, 5s. 6d.; Barnsley Branch, 5s.; Parcel of clothing from Mrs. Mann.

H. S. W., in subscribing to Shilling Week, wishes that something could be done at Weymouth in the way of Freethought propaganda. There are several Freethinkers in the place, but on the whole it is the most bigoted in the south of England.

D. G. LINDSAY.—Thanks for Glasgow list of subscriptions.

E. RAE.—In June, 1877, the *Secular Review* and *Secularist* amalgamated. No. 1, vol. i., bears date June 9, 1877.

W. CABELL thinks that some of Mr. Symes's queries in our last issue were unhappy. For instance, "Why none of those benefited by Jesus took the trouble to preach his gospel or advertise his healing power." Our correspondent points to Mark vii. 36, which flatly contradicts this. Mr. Symes would probably reply that the statement is too general, and appears only in the Christian record, without any outside corroboration.

E. P.—Thanks for your subscription, which is acknowledged in list. No doubt boys might sell some copies of the *Freethinker* on Sunday mornings, but there are difficulties in the way. Their mothers interfere, or their employers object to "blasphemy" being associated with "proper" publications—such, for instance, as the pictorial ones that purvey nudity.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Surely there must be some mistake. We can hardly believe that Mr. Waldron could publicly speak of Colonel Ingersoll as a loud-mouthed orator and blasphemer, as an advocate of the doctrine that a man who tires of one wife should take another, and as one who cursed his mother's God and called her a fool for believing in the Bible. We hope Mr. Waldron will be able and willing to deny that he uttered such contemptible stuff. The other matters shall be looked into, and dealt with next week if possible.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Rochdale Observer—Straits Times—Isle of Man Times—Leek Times—Church Reformer—Le Peuple—Le Matin—Reynolds's Newspaper—Weekly Dispatch—Melbourne Age—The Literary Guide—English Mechanic—Two Worlds—Melbourne Standard—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought—Open Court—Zoophilist—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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.

SHILLING WEEK.

As we go to press on Wednesday, the *Freethinker* is practically completed on Tuesday evening. I am therefore only able to acknowledge, this week, the subscriptions that have reached me up to the end of the first day in October. Six more days remain to complete the first week, and I hope every one of them will bring me a large batch of letters with remittances.

The object of this subscription, as already stated, is to send good Freethought lecturers into all parts of the kingdom. With the unanimous concurrence of the National Secular Society's Executive, I am taking personal charge of this enterprise; and what I can do will depend on the means placed at my disposal.

It seems to me that such means should be adequate. There are scores of Freethinkers who could spare a pound, hundreds who could spare a few shillings, thousands who could spare one. If all who can do something, whatever it is, will only do it, we shall see the beginning of a new era in the propagation of Freethought.

As it happens, this is "Self-Denial Week" with the Salvation Army. "General" Booth's soldiers are denying themselves meat, tea, sugar, and all sorts of comforts and even necessaries. I do not ask my readers to go to that extreme. I only ask them, especially if they feel "saved"

themselves, to assist in carrying salvation to others. Let them not wait for "a more favorable opportunity," but give what they can afford, however small it may be. There should be a glorious feeling of comradeship in the knowledge that now—at this very hour—other Free-thinkers in other parts of the country are doing the very same thing. Though they cannot see each other, they know of each other's existence, being connected by the impalpable and invisible ties of common sympathy for a splendid cause.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

J. B., 2s.; Le Diable, 2s. 6d.; H. J. Barter, 2s. 6d.; J. M., 2s. 6d.; W. Clogg, 1s.; W. C. Stuart, £1 1s.; Plymouth Friend, per H. J. B., 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Beszant, 4s.; A Friend, £1; C. Shepherd, 2s.; W. C. (Dorking), 10s. 6d.; W. Lamb, 4s.; Hemalite, 2s.; E. Calvert, 1s.; T. Dunbar, 1s. 6d.; A. Haynes, 1s.; Cheshire Branch of the N.S.S., 10s.; Old Devonian, 2s.; G. Holloway, 1s.; M. Christopher, 1s.; J. Eccles, 1s. 6d.; H. S. Woolley, 3s.; E. P., £1; Alpha, 1s.; J. Brierley, 1s.; W. A. Newcomb, 1s.; Daniel Baker, 5s.; Worker, 1s.; J. Garven, 1s.; H. W. D., 15s.; H. A. Cumber, 5s.; R. Verney, 2s.; C. D., 10s.; J. H. Williamson, 2s. 6d.; A. Firth, 2s.; W. W. Roberts, 2s.; C. J. Gask, 2s. 6d.; H. J. Thorp, 3s.; Victmount, 1s.

From Glasgow:—D. McFarlane, 1s.; J. Threlkeld, 1s.; W. Albin, 1s.; T. Train, 2s.; W. Owen, 1s.; A. Young, 1s.; T. McCormack, 1s.; W. F., 2s.

Per Miss Vance:—H. Good, 2s.; W. Nash, 1s.; Mrs. Marsh, 1s.; J. Embleton, 2s.

Per R. Forder:—J. H. Bogg, 1s. 9d.; W. L., 1s.; W. Palmer, 1s.; M. L., 1s.; S. H. Munns, 1s.; J. Munns, 1s.; Mrs. Small, 10s.; J. Edwards, 4s.; Toby King (1s. a week yearly), 52s.; F. T. R., 10s.; Four Britons, 4s.; W. Baxter, 1s.; H. Wallace, 1s.; T. Dunbar Harris, 20s.; W. J. Scottow, 2s. 6d.

SUGAR PLUMS.

In spite of the phenomenal weather, there was an improved audience at Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Clinging to Christ." When the cold weather sets in the hall will no doubt be thoroughly crowded. Up to the present the collections have been really good. Mr. Foote's taking the personal responsibility of the venture seems to have appealed to the audience's generosity. One friend, on Sunday evening, dropped a sovereign in the collection plate. As for the lecture, it was received with most pronounced enthusiasm. Mr. James Rowney made, as usual, an excellent chairman.

Following his new plan, Mr. Foote lectures this evening (October 6) in the Masonic Hall, High-street, Wood-Green; a populous neighborhood on the northern heights of London. There has been a good deal of open-air Freethought propaganda in the district, and the enterprise of the Branch in starting indoor lectures ought to be crowned with success. Mr. Foote's lecture is on "Life, Death, and After." During the evening he will name a child of Mr. Thompson. Tickets of admission to this lecture (1s., 6d., and 3d.) can be obtained of Mr. John Wood, 71 Gladstone-avenue; or of Mr. S. R. Thompson, 95 Clyde-road, South Tottenham.

Mr. John Wood, secretary of the Wood Green Branch, will be outside the Masonic Hall at 7 o'clock, ready to inform non-holders of tickets where they can obtain them.

The Wood Green open-air meetings have been much disturbed lately. Christian rowdies have endeavored to break them up, and we hear that the police have looked on with indifference at obvious breaches of the peace. Mr. C. Cohen delivers a special lecture at Jolly Butchers' Hill next Thursday evening (October 10) at 8 o'clock, and we hope the local Freethinkers will rally around him on that occasion.

Notwithstanding the remarkable weather we have been having of late, Mr. Charles Watts had a capital audience at Camberwell last Sunday evening. His lecture on "The Bible and Civilisation" was most enthusiastically received, Mr. Watts being in his best form. We are glad to hear that new members are joining this promising Branch of the N.S.S.

This evening (Sunday, October 6) Mr. Watts occupies the platform at Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road, E.C., when he will deliver his new lecture, "The Bible and Dramatic Literature." It is a good subject, and should draw a crowded audience.

We have received a welcome letter from Mr. S. P. Putnam, who arrived safe, sound, and jolly at New York, and is now busy in preparing for the Annual Convention of the American Secular Union. Mr. Putnam's passage was rather a stormy one, but he was not sea-sick; in fact, he came up—or rather went down—smiling every time the bell rang for meals. One big wave that washed the deck broke a clergyman's leg. No doubt it was intended for friend Putnam, but it missed its mark. Still, we are sorry for the clergyman, though he has got a good text for a new sermon on Providence.

The *Leek Times* reproduces Mr. Foote's leaderette on "Mr. Howard's Challenge" from the *Freethinker*, and we shall see what the reverend gentleman has to say in reply. It is charitable to pass over his long and wordy letter on Mr. Wheeler's brief note. We prefer to take Mr. Howard, if he will let us, on his manlier side. He concludes by expressing admiration for Mr. Foote's "great ability and earnestness." "Would," he says, "that all our preachers were as active in spreading the truth as he is in diffusing his unbelief. Surely he and men like him should put many of us to shame. We wish him nothing worse than that his distinguished abilities and untiring efforts should be spent in a worthy cause, and that he might achieve the success commensurate with the same." Mr. Howard will pardon Mr. Foote for thinking that the Freethought cause is "worthy" of his best service.

Professor Ernst Haeckel, contrasting Huxley and Carl Vogt, says that the former laid his foundations far deeper than Vogt had done. Vogt had a liking for laughing at philosophy generally, while Huxley gave it duly the highest place in the whole kingdom of science. As a Monistic philosopher and founder of the ape-theory, Huxley ranks higher than Vogt. Thomas Huxley belonged to that small number of far-seeing naturalists who, from the very beginning, saw the epoch-making import of Darwin's work of research carried on through fifty years, and who, with unselfish devotion, worked out the detailed application of his theories and aided their propagation. The pre-requisites for such work were not only an extensive and thorough knowledge in all fields of biology and a clear sagacity of judgment, but also that moral courage which, regardless of consequences, assails a "mountain of prejudices" many thousand years old, and seeks truth for its own sake.

The British Association having decided to visit Toronto in 1897, they will be invited to become the guests of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which will probably hold its meeting at San Francisco.

On Monday, October 14, the Finsbury Branch of the N.S.S. have a dinner and entertainment in the large hall of the Eldorado Club, 30 East-street, City-road, E.C. The tickets, which for two shillings include Dinner, Concert, and Dance, can be obtained from the secretary, 21 Coburg-street, Clerkenwell, or at 28 Stonecutter-street.

Mr. Parris lectures in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, this Sunday, both morning and evening. His subjects, as usual, are interesting and important.

A commemorative tablet has been placed on the house at Potsdam in which Helmholtz was born. It is expected that the house at Ealing where Huxley first saw the light will be marked in a similar manner.

The National Congress of the American Secular Union and the Freethought Federation of America will be held at New York on October 25 and 26. The Revival of Sunday Laws in New York should serve to consolidate the forces of Freethought.

In the *Islamic World* Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam contrasts the superstitious medicine of the seventeenth century with the long anterior science of the Arabs, much to the disadvantage of the former. Moulri Mohammad Aboul Ghani, B.A., M.D., also shows there is something to be said for Eastern polygamy—at any rate, when contrasted with Western prostitution.

Mr. Cohen has had fairly successful meetings during his three weeks' mission at Birmingham, especially at his open-air lectures. He winds up to-day (October 6), and we hope there will be a good attendance. Tea will be provided in the hall for visitors from a distance. We are glad to hear that Mr. Cohen's mission has brought the Branch several new members.

Mr. Frank Creswell is the new secretary of the Newcastle Branch, which augurs well for its future prosperity. Mr. J. G. Bartram, who has for some time conducted the Branch's business with zeal and ability, has had to resign in consequence of change of employment and removal from the

city. It has been decided to resume the Sunday morning lectures on the quayside.

We hope the Newcastle friends will do their utmost to make a great success of the approaching debate between Mr. Charles Watts and the Rev. A. J. Waldron. A large hall is engaged, and we hope it will be crowded. Some local misunderstanding has existed, but this should not interfere with a serious interest. Mr. Foote appeals personally to all his friends in the district to make the debate widely known, and not only to attend themselves, but to bring as many as possible of their acquaintances.

The Bradford Branch will have a Tea and Dance on Tuesday evening (Oct. 8) in the Milton Rooms, Westgate. Tea on tables at 6.30. After the tea the dancing will proceed till eleven o'clock. Tickets are ninepence each, and can be obtained of Messrs. Gott, Sunderland, and J. T. Carpendale, secretary, 38 Acton-street. There ought to be a good muster.

A monument has been erected in Rome to the Liberal poet, Pietro Cossa. Cossa was expelled from a Jesuit college, being accused of heresy and Liberalism. He was afterwards exiled, and went to Peru. The scene at the ceremony was one of great enthusiasm.

The new issue of the *Agnostic Annual*, to be published on Monday, will contain a special article by Mr. Samuel Laing in reply to Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*. Mr. J. Allanson Picton contributes an article on "The Man, Christ Jesus: The Germ of the Christian Myth," which should be both important and interesting.

Mr. W. H. Pollock, who writes in *Longman's Magazine* on "Marseilles," says that many of the working classes are Atheists, and do not wrap up their unbelief with such words as "Agnosticism." At the same time, he says, they never take any step of importance in civil life "without an elaborate and expensive church ceremony." Mr. Pollock appears to regard this as singular. He forgets that there are women as well as men in Marseilles, who have to be consulted about baptisms, marriages, and funerals.

The International Conference of Freethinkers, at Brussels, seems to have been well attended. Among speakers were MM. Fulpius, Robin, Schaere, Furnemont, and des Essarts. The ladies were well to the fore, including Frau Wilhelmi, Mlle. Verone, Mmes. Barberousse, Van Kol, etc. It was even proposed by one delegate that the government of the family should be matriarchal, children taking names from their mothers; but this was negatived in favor of the complete equality of the sexes. A proposition to make August 15 a festival of peace was also negatived. Messrs. Forder and Ward represented the National Secular Society.

Mr. W. Heaford is spending a part of his annual holiday on a lecturing tour in the north. He had three very successful meetings at Glasgow on Sunday. The evening lecture on "Is Christianity Consistent with Socialism?" gave rise to a protracted discussion, sustained principally by Anarchist opponents. Mr. Heaford is to hold a debate with Mr. M. Gass, who is retained by the Bridgeton Branch of the Independent Labor Party, on the question, "Do the Teachings of Jesus Christ Proclaim Socialism?"

The Failsworth Secular Sunday-school has arranged a String Band Concert, interspersed with songs, for this evening (Oct. 6). It begins at 6.30, and the admission is free, with a collection to defray expenses. Secular friends in the neighborhood, if they drop in, will spend an enjoyable evening.

Christian Science.

The following interesting reply was returned to a circular letter soliciting subscriptions to a certain medical journal (*Pacific Drug Review*):—"Fairbault, Minn., February 22nd, 1894.—Your copy of the ——— Journal come, and the letter to, askin me to send fifty cens and git it fur a veer, I dont need no jurnals. When I git a tuff case, I go off inter sum secret plase and tell the lord all about it and wate for him to put inter my minde what ter do. That's bettern jurnals and skyloped and such. If we hed more lord trustin doctors and less colleges weed fare better. The lord noes morn all the doctors, and if we go to him for noledge it ill be bettern jurnals naterally in the lord.—A CHRISTIAN DOCTER."—*Dublin Journal of Medical Science*.

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (August 24).

THERE is no evidence that the poet's married life was an unhappy one; that he ever ceased his affection for his wife, or that he went to London from any other motive than an honorable desire to better his condition and that of his family. There is no evidence that he ever stole the deer, or was arrested for any youthful escapade and had to run away. There is no doubt that Shakespeare was a manly youth, honest, straightforward, energetic, and handsome. He went to London to make a fortune. He probably had many good friends to help him, among them the actors who visited his native town and were cordially welcomed and sustained by Shakespeare's father, who was fond of dramatic entertainments. There is no evidence that Shakespeare went to London penniless, or that he was obliged to hold horses at the theatre doors for a scanty living. Shakespeare was a first-class business man, practical and sagacious, if he was a poet. I have no doubt he went to London with a good capital to start with and ample support. He was the kind of man to make friends and to keep them. Shakespeare became, for his time, a very wealthy man; and not by luck, but by foresight, labor, pluck, and perseverance.

From Ann Hathaway's cottage we drive to the church, a noble structure, which shows by its size and stateliness that Stratford must have been a town of note before Shakespeare's era. What a beautiful churchyard is here, the sunlight falling through the green arches upon the green grass and the solemn gravestones, even as when the poet mused and dreamed along the banks of the Avon. We enter the church and wander among the memorials of the dead. We stand by the tomb of Shakespeare. I can only express myself in the noble words of Washington Irving: "There are other monuments around, but the mind refuses to dwell on anything that is not connected with Shakespeare; his idea pervades the place, the whole pile seems to be his mausoleum. The feelings, no longer checked and thwarted by doubt, here indulge in perfect confidence. Other traces of him may be false or dubious, but here is palpable evidence and absolute certainty. As I trod the sounding pavement there was something intense and thrilling in the idea that in very truth the remains of Shakespeare were mouldering beneath my feet. It was a long time before I could prevail upon myself to leave the place, and as I passed through the churchyard I plucked a branch from one of the yew-trees, the only relic I have brought from Stratford."

As I was passing through the same churchyard I found the workmen cutting down an ancient yew-tree, of which I secured a branch, also some leaves and grass, and yellow buttercups and white daisies and a beautiful red rose, in whose fading splendors I shall ever see the glory of Stratford church.

From the churchyard we walk past the great Lucy Mill, built about two centuries ago, from under whose wheel the waters of the Avon swirl and dash away; thence we pass over a foot-bridge to the other side of the river; and here, for a half-hour or so, we remain under the stone bridge of the railway, for the rain is coming down in torrents. It was a picturesque scene: the old bridge, the mill and wheel, the church tower just beyond, glimpses of the village, a couple of fishermen on the banks, the prosperous Londoner, besides the yokel who does not seem to have changed since Shakespeare's time, and our own company trying to be as philosophical as possible. When there is a burst of sunshine we make a start over the meadows. The rain, however, has only stopped in order to make a more furious onset, which we meet just as we are half across. But the rain adds such a misty loveliness to the whole scene that I cannot but remain and enjoy it, even if I do get wet to the skin. The river is flowing along, and beyond it on the wooded bank looms the church in a veil of shining mist; and the trees seem to be dripping with a million diamonds, and the grass presents the freshness and cleanliness of an emerald floor, and the roofs of the houses glitter where the columns of rain are already marching off from the advancing sun.

All this journeying and sight-seeing does at last make us hungry, hungry as bears. We therefore betake ourselves to Swan's Nest Hotel. This used to be called "The Leg of Mutton," and the picture of the leg of mutton is still there. I like the title "Leg of Mutton." It is not so euphonious as the present name, but it is more suggestive to the hungry traveller. However, it is a jolly tavern, and we gather around the table and proceed to demolish about the best beefsteak I have ever tackled. As they say in Western parlance, it goes to the spot. If Shakespeare lived on such beefsteak as this, no wonder that he produced such glorious poetry. Beefsteak is much better than Bacon, I think, for Shakespeare poetry.

After the pleasant festivities of the table, we visit the Memorial Theatre, Library, and Picture Gallery. This pile of buildings will always be connected with the name of

MARRIAGE.—At the Registrar's Office, South Shields, Miss Adelaide Emily (Ada) Moir, of South Shields, to Frederick John Stockill, of Leeds. Miss Moir was one of the most useful members of the South Shields Branch.

Charles Fowler, who gave the grounds and worked energetically for its completion. Within is a large library devoted entirely to Shakespeare—his works printed in almost every language. In the last report is noted a donation of books in the Cingalese. In the picture gallery are portraits of actors and actresses in their great Shakespearean characters, and engravings and paintings of many of the famous scenes in the poet's plays. We climb the tower, whence there is a vast and beautiful view of the city and surrounding country. In April, the month of Shakespeare's birth, the theatre is open, and the best dramas of English literature are produced. There is generally a fortnight's festivities, and it is a wonderful occasion for the lovers of Shakespeare. From the building we pass forth into the gardens alongside the Avon, where one can sit for hours and watch the ever-changing prospect and the varying faces of people from all parts of the world, who come to see the memorials of England's greatest glory.

Thence I go to the grammar school where Shakespeare learned "a little Latin and less Greek." This school and the guild were in existence in the fourteenth century. The long room on the ground floor was the Guildhall. This hall is interesting from the fact that it was the scene of dramatic representation in the poet's youth. John Shakespeare, the poet's father, greatly encouraged the drama while mayor. This was when Willie was about five years old. Does it not seem probable that the child's imagination was fired by witnessing these performances? Here is the Latin school-room in which the poet received his classical education, and the very desk is shown at which he used to study. Shakespeare went to school until his fifteenth year, when reverses in his father's estate caused him to be taken out to work on the farm. Still he might have been fitted for the university while in school. The school dates from Edward VI., and the opportunities for instruction were quite favorable. At the time of Shakespeare's youth children were sent to the English schools at the age of five, and at seven they commenced the study of Latin, the regular course taking about ten years, so that boys usually left school for university studies at the age of fifteen. Among the books read were those of Æsop, Ovid, Virgil, Terence, Cicero, Horace, and Seneca. Shakespeare might have been familiar with all these authors when he left Avon. He had good opportunities for a classical education, much more than Ben Jonson gives him credit for. There is not a particle of classical scholarship displayed in Shakespeare's poems that he could not have acquired before he was fifteen years old.

From the grammar school we turn our steps to the New Place, where Shakespeare passed the last years of his life. Alas! the house where Shakespeare lived is gone; only the foundation is left. It was a clergyman who cut down Shakespeare's favorite mulberry-tree in the garden, and also demolished the house itself in 1759. He left Stratford immediately, amid the curses of the inhabitants. The New Place is, at present, a beautiful garden, with many lovely flowers and smooth greensward, and the old stump of the mulberry-tree, which still produces some leaves, and is now carefully guarded from the ravages of time and clergymen. I suppose the modern elegance of the place gives but little idea of what it was in Shakespeare's time, seeing that the building itself is obliterated; but here is the soil on which Shakespeare trod when he rested from his labors, and here was the serene ending of a most wonderful life. Shakespeare's mind was so full in all directions; it was in such exquisite harmony with nature and equipoise with all life, so calm and deep, that he needed no outward pomp for the expression of his genius, no palace, no "golden round," only the sweet felicity of flowers and grass and the summer's sky. The greatness of Shakespeare is shown in the placidity of his closing years.

Returning to "The Swan's Nest," we cross over the Avon by the old Clopton bridge. This is built of stone, and very old stone too. It was the work of Sir Hugh Clopton, Lord Mayor of London, in the reign of King Henry the Seventh. It is 376 yards in length, and has fourteen principal arches. It is even for to-day an admirable structure. The building of a bridge like this at so early a date shows the importance of Stratford. In 1643 the Queen of Charles the First, Henrietta Maria, having to stay in Stratford, chose New Place as her residence. She was entertained by Shakespeare's daughter for three weeks during these troublous times.

I did not have an opportunity to visit the cottage of Mary Arden at Wilmcote. Mary was the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, esquire of Warwickshire. Her marriage portion was fifty acres of arable land, six of meadow, and a right of commonage, which was considerable property for that age. Her father's family must have been cultivated and well-to-do. In 1557 she married John Shakespeare. In 1564 the poet was born.

Mary Arden must have been a beautiful woman, with good blood and good brain and a happy genius. From her motherhood came the crowning glory of the human race. In the temple of her body nature breathed its divinest melody, and the "miracle of birth" revealed its most wondrous joy.

The Shakespeare day is accelerating its close to the Secular Pilgrim. The golden sunlight is over all the beautiful city; over the broad meadows and winding stream; over the stately church and loveliness of the quiet graveyard; over the lowly birthplace, and the gardens and paths of immortal love; over the sweet cottages and the embowering roses; over the forests thrilling with romance like those of Arden itself; over the Memorial building, and the Fountain, and the bright dwellings where modern luxuriance seems to drop like a jewel into the misty past and melt in the mild radiance of antiquity. Beautiful scene! and in this enchanting hour of mingling day and night, the chambers of the brain all crowded with imageries of Shakespeare, and the heart filled with unutterable emotions as the voices of the ages seem to call in tenderest music—in this resplendent evening we glide over the bosom of the river Avon. We see the fishermen along the banks; the boys in bathing; the boats sweeping past; the dimpling waters whispering to the shores. There are the willows and the rushes; the leafy beds of osiers; the mossy stone steps; the little bird on its precarious perch swaying almost to the water as it poises to take flight again; the green meadows and blue hills in the dim distance; the cattle coming to drink, or standing in the shallow water; the hedgerows and the flowers reflected in the glassy depths; the buds of the water lily, and the tiny water-rat plunging in and leaving a bubble or two on the placid surface; tall poplars and elms that fringe the bank, and flowers—the flowers of Shakespeare. Think of them all—the daffodils, the violets, the primroses, the cowslips, the Mary-buds, the honey-suckle, the pansies, and columbine. Do we not hear the song?—

When daisies pied, and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight.

And so, with the rhythm of the poet vibrating in the mind, and the river flowing musically along as it flowed centuries ago, when

Sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,
Warbled his native wood-notes wild,

dreamily we voyage the Avon, while the sunset light is flushed with the emerald hues of leaf and grass, dancing far as the eye can range to some Orphic harmony; and then our songs break forth, songs of native land, songs of freedom and of humanity; and from the opulent past, where man has blazoned his magnificent genius from nature's burning heat, we look into the future with hope born of a thousand years of toil, and in the splendor of Shakespeare's genius and the splendor of his native soil we see all life enriched, all work made glorious, and the thought and heart of man triumphant.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

A CHINESE MANDARIN ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

MR. C. P. HODGES, who, despite his English name and birth, is a Mandarin of the Crystal Button and a leader of the Chinese in Australia, writes to the *Melbourne Herald* on the subject of the late outrages, which, he says, the Chinese of the colony unanimously regret. He points out that four hundred millions of people must not be considered responsible for the doings of some thousands of fanatics. He notes that in China the religion and the State are so bound together that Christianity in antagonising the one inevitably touches the other. The missionaries are, he says, subverters of the nation. He asks: "Suppose a society of Chinese males and their wives and some single women, all worthy persons, should essay in Melbourne to convert such as they could to the doctrines of Confucius. They obtain access, or, to more correctly illustrate the case, gently force themselves into people's houses and induce women to leave their homes, thus outraging a strong prejudice rooted by custom and education. For, according to Chinese usages, a woman cannot receive anything from the hand of a man unless he be husband or son, and then not in the presence of strangers, even in her own house. Straightway, as the proclamation of the Vegetarians set forth, there is discord; 'a man is set at variance with his father, and the daughter against the mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.' Carried to the extent thus, as in some places in China, what would be the result of such injudicious meddling here? Why, without an executive power able to protect them, all the violence of Kucheng would be enacted in Little Bourke-street."

Such a parallel he shows is insufficient, because Chinese politics and religion are built on filial piety. On the very threshold of the new faith the Chinese are asked to accept, they are told that a man must leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. Their answer is: "They which commit such things are worthy of death." The sayings of

Christ, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" "Let the dead bury the dead," and "Except a man hate father and mother he cannot be my disciple," seem to the Chinese subversive of the true foundations of society, and to take children away from their natural guardians to teach them such doctrines they regard as the height of impiety.

It is clear, from a published letter of one of the victims, that the question of the marriage of believers with unbelievers has been raised and settled adverse to family considerations. As the importance of succession rests on the side of the sons, so there are matters of only secondary importance affected by the disposal of the daughters, if indeed they can be deemed secondary. Any interference with the customs of this religious and domestic rite would arouse strong feelings of resentment. Mandarin Hodges says Europeans wish to force their way into China, oblivious that they thus force natives out. The unreasonable hostility to the Chinese in foreign lands is beginning to have effect. Millions of them have returned to China with one unvarying tale. The Christians treat them as enemies, while pretending that God has made of one blood all nations.

CHRIST.

Thus said the Christian's Christ: "To me
A better love shalt thou extend
Than that thou giv'st in full degree
To father, mother, friend."

Through the sweet love of wife and child,
The love that softens human need,
A man with God is reconciled
If God be God indeed.

But if through love so freely spent
He cannot reach God's love and grace,
Shall he not then be well content
With that which fills its place?

For greater love can none possess
Than that which goes by friendship's name;
The love of God must needs be less,
If it be not the same.

From the best passions of the heart,
From love most god-like and benign,
This Christ hath set himself apart,
And is no more divine.

He is as one who should remove
Man's faith by preaching faith abroad:
"Lo, I am love, who know not love;
God is not: I am God."

PYRITES.

PROFANE JOKES.

"What are you going to preach about to-morrow?" asked a minister's wife of her husband. "I am going to preach about female vanity." "You will have to select some other topic. I'm going to wear my new dress and hat."

Rev. Dr. Steenthly—"Yes, my beloved hearers, money is the root of all evil. And now a collection will be taken to make up the arrears in your pastor's salary. The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

The new minister had arrived at Deacon Clover's house, and was to remain a few days. When the evening was far spent, the dominie was escorted to his bedroom by the deacon, who said, as he opened the door to the rather small apartment: "This, Dr. Fourthly, is the prophet's chamber." "Ah," replied the clergyman, as he surveyed its circumscribed dimensions, "it must have been one of the minor prophets."

It was the custom of a certain clergyman to point his sermons with either "Dearly beloved brethren," or "Now, my dear brothers," until one day a lady member of the congregation took exception to this, and asked him why he always preached to the gentlemen and never to the ladies. "My dear lady," said his reverence, "the one embraces the other." Lady—"But not in the church."

A Polish Jew was admitted to heaven for his piety, but, on entering, he took his seat in a corner and wept bitterly; so Jehovah asked him the cause of his despondency, to which he replied that, although he himself had scrupulously observed the law of Moses, yet he considered himself unworthy to sit with the righteous in heaven "on account of his unnatural son," who had become a Christian. "Is that all?" answered Jehovah. "Why, the very same thing happened to me."

BOOK CHAT.

The Structure and Authorship of the New Testament, by I. Panin (Grafton, Mass.), is an attempt to make out that the various writings received as canonical by the Christian Church, are really inspired by one mind, on account of certain arithmetical calculations discovered in them. Thus the author says: "The whole vocabulary of Matthew has 1656 words, or twenty-three seventy-twos, of which the first seventy-two is thus assigned to this genealogy." Wonderful! Mr. Panin finds his conclusions on the text of Westcott and Hort; but, if he had taken other texts, he would have had to make different calculations, and would doubtless have come to equally wonderful conclusions. Mr. Panin convinced himself by his method that Westcott and Hort are wrong in rejecting the last twelve verses of Mark, and the story of the woman taken in adultery. It seems to us his method is hardly sane, and his conclusions are valueless. We find that in his appendix, on page 67, he has to admit that a statement on page 42 "proves to be incorrect." We think Mr. Panin might do well to consult some friends before he issues further publications impugning the conclusions of the critics.

* * *

F. M. Holland has, in *Open Court*, a good sketch of Frances Wright, one of the pioneers of women's rights and freethought in America. Mr. Holland says: "Her ablest book, published in 1822, and entitled *A Few Days in Athens*, is a complete vindication of the life and teachings of Epicurus against slanders not yet extinct. She shows how plainly he distinguished between pleasure and vice; her style is that of a novelist, and she draws a charming portrait of herself as one of the disciples of a philosopher who has been sadly misunderstood." The work is published by Mr. Forder, with an Introduction on the Epicurean Philosophy, and a sketch of the life of the authoress by J. M. Wheeler.

* * *

Mr. Holland thus concludes his estimate of Frances Wright: "Her influence in destroying intolerance and slavery, as well as in reforming education, was very great, and we can feel sure of the fulfilment of her generous wish, published in the *Free Inquirer*, on August 12, 1829: 'Let Death conquer my memory, and let the world preserve those principles which it is the object of my life to establish.'"

* * *

In the same number of *Open Court* is an interesting account of "Christening in Cyprus," supplied, from a private letter, by Mr. M. D. Conway. The infant in Cyprus is plunged naked three times, in the name of the Father, Son, and Ghost, into hot oil and water in a round copper which served as font. Then three locks of the baby's hair are cut off, with a new pair of scissors, in the name of the Trinity, and cast into the font. We suppose this is dispensed with in the case of a bald baby; or do they wait till the hair grows? This done, a cross with blue ribbon is put round its neck, and, the devils thus exorcised and propitiated, the child becomes a Christian.

* * *

It must not be supposed, from the advocacy by Sir Douglas Galton of the "meteorite hypothesis," that therefore the Nebular Hypothesis, first put forward by La Place and endorsed by Herschel and Herbert Spencer, is defunct. On the contrary, an elaborate defence of *The Nebular Theory in Relation to Stellar, Solar, Planetary, Cometary, and Geological Phenomena*, by William Ford Stanley, F.R.A.S., is this year published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co.

* * *

Mr. B. Dobell, 77 Charing Cross-road, announces as in the press *Gluck and the Opera* by Ernest Newman, *Human Documents* by Arthur Lynch, and *Like Stars That Fell* by Geoffrey Mortimer.

* * *

Mind and Motion and Monism, the last work of the late George John Romanes, is announced by Longmans, Green, & Co.

* * *

The Open Court Publishing Co., of Chicago, announces for publication early in October a collection of popular sketches of the religious and secular history of Israel, by Professor C. H. Cornill, one of the foremost orthodox authorities on the Old Testament history in Europe; *Post-Darwinian Questions*, the second part of the late Professor George J. Romanes's *Darwin and After Darwin*; and *The Primary Factors of Organic Evolution*, by Professor E. D. Cope.

A lively discussion on the Biblical aspect of the Temperance question has been going on in the *Kirkcubright Herald*. Such discussions do a great deal of good, and the contortions of the numerous advocates of Bible temperance are certainly amusing.

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.

- FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Bible and Dramatic Literature."
BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, conclusion of debate between Stanley Jones and Cyrus Symons on "The Soul and Science."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Dr. A. A. Baile, "Health and its Morals."
PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Humanitarianism."
WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, G. C. H. Carter, "The Moral Value of the Apostles' Creed."
WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.
WOOD GREEN (Masonic Hall, adjoining the Nightingale Hotel, High-street): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Life, Death, and After."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

- BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, debate between Stanley Jones and Cyrus Symons (Unitarian) on "The Soul and Science"; 3, a lecture.
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Christianity and Evolution."
CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, R. Forder will lecture. (Collection for L.S.F.)
DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. James will lecture.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.
OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Jews on the March." (Annual collection for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.)
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

- BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, C. Cohen, "The French Revolution—Part III., Daybreak"; 3 "An Hour with the Devil"; 7, "What Think Ye of Christ?" At 5, Tea and social gathering.
BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, business meeting—election of secretary.
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.
DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, A paper.
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class—J. Cowie, "Tolstoi on the Church and State"; 6.30, Neuron, "Bible Fictions and Malay Archipelago Facts."
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, Touzeau Parris, "Some Bible Symbols: Their Origin and Meaning"; 6.30, "Man: Whence he Comes and How."
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Quarterly meeting of Tontine Society; 7, Ernest Newman, "The Re-union of Christendom."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, John Barlow, "The Great Revolution of 1905."
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, R. Mitchell will lecture.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, A Competent Scientific Gentleman, "The Evidence for Evolution"; 7, "Animals and Plants: their Relationship" (with lantern illustrations).
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King street): 7, Captain W. B. Duncan, "The Globular Theory."
STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, "Secularism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

- DERBY (Market-place): 10.45, W. Briggs, "Secularism and Monarchy."
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, R. Mitchell, "The Bible and Science."
SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 3, T. Thompson, "A Rationalistic View of Historic Christianity."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—October 6 Birmingham; 13, Leicester; 20, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 23 and 24, Chester-le-Street; 27, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 28 and 29, Stockton-on-Tees; 31, Blackburn. November 1, Blackburn; 3, Sheffield; 4, 5, and 6, Barnsley; 10, Foresters' Hall, London; 17 and 24, Bradford. December 1, 5, and 6, Edinburgh; 8, Glasgow; 15, Blackburn.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N.—October 6 m. and e. Battersea; 7, Edmonton; 13, Pimlico Pier; 14, Edmonton; 20 and 27, King'sland.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—October 6, Camberwell; 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—October 6, Leicester; 13 and 20, Wood Green; 27, Foresters' Hall. November 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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