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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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TALES FROM THE BIBLE.

Tales from the Bible, Told to My Daughter. By F. J. Gould.
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MR. GOULD is a true soldier in the great army of human liberation. We have not the slightest doubt that his worldly prospects have been seriously injured by his devotion to Freethought. He has sacrificed what he valued least, and preserved his independence and self-respect. For many years he has served his ideas with a well-practised pen. His information is extensive, his English is irreproachable, and his style is one of admirable lucidity. We are able to speak with unstinted praise of his *Concise History of Religion*, two volumes of which have already been published. When the third appears, to complete the work, Mr. Gould may claim—though he will not claim—to have adequately filled an obvious gap in the more instructive literature of Rationalism.

Many of our readers will recollect that Mr. Gould is profoundly interested in the education of children, and sternly opposed to Bible teaching in Board schools. His passionate, but by no means wild, protest against such teaching was widely circulated during the last School Board elections in London, and brought upon him the ridiculous abuse of the *Daily Chronicle*. Mr. Gould's letter, which appears on another page of the *Freethinker*, calls upon Freethinkers to withdraw their children from religious instruction. We hope there will be a wide response to his appeal. The present writer has three children who are thus withdrawn from superstitious influence. He mentions the fact, not boastfully, but simply to persuade others, if he may, by his own example. Children are not so cruelly martyred by this policy as parents are apt to imagine; and, after all, it is well that they should have a taste of something else than mere acquiescence, even in the tender age of intellectual infancy.

Mr. Gould, however, is not opposed to Bible reading by children, though he is opposed to their reading it in public schools. With certain by no means unimportant qualifications, he seems to share the view of the late Professor Huxley on this subject. Like this great scientist, and still greater controversialist, Mr. Gould holds the Bible in high estimation. Of course he is entitled to his opinion, but we must frankly say that we are unable to share it. The literary and historical value of the Bible seems to us to be monstrously exaggerated, even by persons who have emancipated themselves from its supernaturalism. From the point of view of evolution, it is simply invaluable; but this point of view is necessarily impossible to children.

The volume before us is an outcome of Mr. Gould's ideas on the Bible. The tales were written for his own daughter, not yet in her teens, and is published for "readers of her age and general capacity." That the book is well written goes without saying. Judged from the author's standpoint, it is a most excellent performance; and, considering the multitude of Christian books about the Bible, we hazard a hope that this one by a Freethinker may have an opportunity, through a wide circulation, of achieving its utmost possible usefulness.

But the question remains whether Mr. Gould's standpoint is the right one, and it is only fair to let him explain it, as he does in the following paragraph of his Preface:—

"Many parents, who have freed themselves from the narrow orthodoxy which misunderstands the Bible while
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professing to revere it, often halt between two opinions. At one time they deem it best to keep the Bible altogether out of their children's hands; in which case the young people are deprived of information which is necessary to the comprehension of a large part of human history. At another time they incline to letting the children receive the popular religious instruction; in this case the young minds get imbued with doctrines and ideas which run counter to reason and to the moral sense. I counsel a middle way. Let the child be introduced to the Bible literature through a simple manual in which the picturesque old legends shall be related; but let the stories be combined with suggestions and warnings which will prevent an intelligent child from believing that all the narratives of the Bible are historical, or all its teachings pure."

The "middle way" is dear to Englishmen, but, in this case, what is its justification? We start, of course, from the position that the Bible is not the word of God; that it is not in any way inspired; that it is entirely a human production; that it is simply a statement of the mythology, legends, religious beliefs, and ethical doctrines of the Jews and the early Christians. Now what is the use of such a book to children, unless they are to accept its mythology and legends as history, and its religion and ethics as divinely authoritative? Christians desire children to accept the Bible in that way, and are logical in making them read it—and it alone of all the "sacred scriptures" of the world. But the Freethinker does not regard the Bible as unique, nor does he recognise its claim to any sort of authority. To him it is one religious book among many, and its importance in any part of Christendom is merely a geographical accident. Giving it a position of uniqueness, therefore, is at once a concession to Christian bigotry and an affront to the principles of evolution and humanity.

There seems to us no more reason for giving children the Bible to read than for giving them the Koran, the Vedas, the Buddhist scriptures, or any other of the "sacred books of the East," which make such a formidable array in Max Müller's edition.

We cannot see, either, that the Bible is "necessary to the comprehension of a large part of human history." The history of the ancient Jews, even if the Bible really contains it, is not of transcendent importance. Civilisation owes immensely more to the great empires of which we only catch glimpses in the Jewish scriptures. From the secular standpoint, a child had far better read Rollin, or some more recent history of antiquity. Above all, let him read Plutarch, who, historically and humanly, is worth all the Bible writers put together. As to the New Testament, how much history does it contain? To learn the history of the Christian religion we have to go to other sources.

The Bible is a book of *supernaturalism*. There is the fact which makes it an impossible book for the children of Freethinkers. Mr. Gould relates its "picturesque old legends," and what is the result? Most of the simple charm of the original has vanished, and what remains is minimised by the constant necessity of saying "Of course it isn't true." Sometimes the imaginative element is eliminated, and the result is mere distraction. "Out of the darkness," Mr. Gould says, "sprang a man who wrestled with Jacob for some hours." Now there is no man in the story; the other party in that wrestle was superhuman—an angel or Yahveh himself. And in this lies its romantic interest; but there is nothing particularly interesting in a "some

hours" wrestle between a couple of mere men, unless it is related with varied and exciting details; and even then there should be some prize or great object achieved at the finish. "Some hours" fighting is all very well, if the victor rescues and marries the lovely ill-used heroine.

We should like to treat this subject at greater length, but our space is too limited on this occasion. Our difference with Mr. Gould is expressed frankly—we hope not offensively. We should be sorry to detract from the merit of his book, judged from his own standpoint. It is ably and beautifully written; and, we repeat, if books *about* the Bible, *instead* of the Bible, or *preparatory* to it, are to be used at all, this one should take a high and honorable place. Much information is given incidentally, without being officiously obtruded, and the tales are so arranged as to present a "connected, chronological view of the Old Testament."

G. W. FOOTE.

MOON-LORE.

THE wide prevalence of lunar superstitions tends to show their antiquity. Mr. W. F. Meyers (*Notes and Queries on China and Japan*, p. 123) says: "No one can compare the Chinese legend with the popular European belief of the 'man in the moon' without feeling convinced of the certainty that the Chinese superstition and the English nursery tale are both derived from kindred parentage, and are linked in this relationship by numerous subsidiary ties. In all the range of Chinese mythology there is, perhaps, no stronger instance of identity with the traditions that have taken root in Europe than in the case of the legends relating to the moon." The Rev. J. Doolittle, in his *Social Life of the Chinese* (vol. ii., p. 65), mentions their making moon-cakes. In Jeremiah vii. 18 we read: "The women knead dough to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven." According to Rashi, an image was stamped on these cakes. Our hot-cross buns probably commemorate the worship of the moon—Diana of the crossways. The Greeks made, for Selene, cakes called *σεληναί*—moon-shaped; and moon-cakes used to be made not so long ago in Lancashire.

The Virgin Mary has been, by some, connected with the moon. She is depicted standing on a crescent, and surrounded with stars. She is called in the Missal "Sancta Maria, cœli Regina, et mundi Domine." Her first worshippers were the female Collyridians, who sought her favor by libations and offerings of cakes. In the Apocryphal Gospel of Matthew, and in the Gospel of Mary's Nativity, we read that when the Blessed Virgin was an infant she ran up the fifteen steps of the temple at full speed, which may, perhaps, describe the progress of the new moon to the full.

What Tacitus says of the Germans, that they believe that certain things are best undertaken in the new moon, or before its full, is applicable to the peasant to-day; and not to the Teutonic race only, but to Slavs, Kelts, Chinese, and Central Africans. Tusser, in his *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, writes:—

Sowe peason and beanes in the wane of the moone—
Who soweth them sooner, he soweth too soone—
That they with the planet may rest and arise
And flourish, with bearing most plentiful-wise.

In Cornwall people still gather their medicinal plants when the moon is of a certain age, and pigs must always be killed when the moon is coming to the full. By performing all sorts of operations at stated times and seasons, unlettered people kept themselves in time with the lord of growth, the light of darkness, and great time regulator, the moon. While the calendar remained lunar thirteen was a lucky number, but when solar reckoning came in it became a feminine symbol and unlucky.

Aubrey, in his *Remaines of Gentilisme* (p. 83), says: "In Yorkshire, etc., northwards, some country woemen doe worship the New Moon on their bare knees, kneeling upon an earth-fast stone. And the people of Athol, in the High lands in Scotland, doe worship the New Moon." Camden, in his *Britannia* (vol. ii., p. 380), writes of the Irish: "Whether or no they worship the moon I know not; but when they first see her after the change they commonly bow the knee and say the Lord's Prayer; and, near the wane, address themselves to her with a loud voice, after

this manner: Leave us as well as thou foundest us." Halliwell Phillips mentions, among his *Popular Rhymes*:—

I see the moon, and the moon sees me;
God bless the moon, and God bless me.

This looks like a Christian adaptation of older moon-worship. In Devonshire it is lucky to see the moon over the right, but unlucky to see it over the left shoulder. To see it straight before you is good fortune to the end of the month.

T. Thiselton Dyer says: "Various forms of moon-worship survive in the divinations and superstitious rites still associated, here and there, with its changes, many of which are supposed to influence the affairs of daily life. Thus the peasant considers it unlucky to have no piece of silver money in his pocket to turn for prosperity when he first sees the new moon. In Yorkshire the only way of averting this ill-omen is at once to turn head over heels." "I have known persons," says Mr. Hunt (*Popular Romances of West of England*, p. 429), speaking of Cornish superstitions, "whose attention has been called to a clear new moon, hesitate: 'Hey, I seed her out a'doors afore.' If not, they will go into the open air, and, if possible, show the moon a piece of gold, or at all events turn their money."

In Berkshire and other counties, says Mr. Dyer, at the appearance of a new moon, young women go into the fields, and, whilst looking up at it, repeat the following rhyme:—

New moon, new moon, I hail thee!
By all virtue in thy body,
Grant this night that I may see
He who my true love is to be.

Georgina F. Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 256, says: "I was myself accustomed in my childhood, on the first sight of the new moon, to curtsy three times, turning round between each curtsy in the expectation of receiving a present before the next moon. Some require nine bows or curtseys without the mystic turns, and some Shrewsbury friends simply perform the ceremony 'for luck,' without the definite expectation of a gift. The rite prescribed by a lady at Ruyton is to curtsy three times, saying, 'Pretty moon, pretty moon, pretty moon!' It is also lucky to get someone to kiss you when you see the new moon."

Mr. F. E. Sawyer, in his *Sussex Folk-Lore and Superstitions*, mentions a Sussex girl admitted to one of Dr. Barnardo's Village Homes who (*Night and Day*, 1881) says she had no knowledge of God; "the only thing she had any reverence for was the moon." She said: "You mustn't point at the moon like that, and you mustn't talk about it." A clergyman of Shrewsbury says he was instructed in childhood that it is wicked to point the finger at the moon! In Germany it is held wicked to point at the stars, "because they are angels' eyes." Mrs. Latham says that in West Sussex they bow or curtsy to the new or lady moon, as she is styled, to deprecate bad luck. The Rev. Mr. Parish says little girls curtsy three times to the new moon, and adds that it would be useless to remonstrate with his churchwarden for trying to catch sight of the new moon over his left shoulder, "especially as he might detect me in turning over my money three times at the same moment." Here I must pause and explain. In old symbology the left side is feminine, the right masculine. To look over the left shoulder has a totally different significance from looking over the right, being the proper way to regard a lady. Turning money in the pocket comes simply from the idea that the increase of the moon causes other things to increase, for which spitting on them is also efficacious.

At the first appearance of the first new moon of the year Sussex girls go out, and, looking on the moon, repeat these lines:—

All hail to thee, Moon, all hail to thee!
I pray thee, good Moon, reveal to me
This night who my lover or husband will be.

In many parts there is a practice of divination by counting the reflections of the moon in the water. This is to tell when the lover, husband, or baby will come. Somerset folk, I believe, are called moon-rakers through this practice. In days gone by it was a common practice among peasants to say, when the moon was full: "It is a fine moon, God help her."

An astronomer showed some Sussex laborers the moon through his telescope. One, being asked his opinion, replied: "Well, sir, it be a gashly sight. Tester, he said so, when he see it; and he wur quite right; for you know, sir, that he haint never been to say well since."

J. M. WHEELER.

THEOLOGICAL PERPLEXITIES.

ACCORDING to the New Testament (1 Peter i. 20), the death of Christ "was foreordained before the foundation of the world"; and theology teaches that man was created perfect and immortal. To the non-theological mind this is exceedingly perplexing, inasmuch as, if it were ordained that Jesus should die for the redemption of the world, the transgressions of Adam and Eve were only a part of God's plan, and certainly did not merit any curse, but rather a blessing. To urge that man had a free will does not remove the difficulty. If man had any choice in the matter, and supposing he had chosen differently, God's plans would have been thwarted. The account of creation as given in the Bible implies that man was so made that he could only follow the course which should ultimately lead to the sacrifice of Christ. Thus the fourth Gospel tells us that Christ knew from the beginning that Judas would betray him (John xiii. 21). Now, if the death of Christ was pre-ordained, so also was "the fall of man," as the one depends upon the other. "For as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive." If this be true, it was impossible for man to have been created perfect. But if man gave way to temptation, was not that a proof of his imperfection?

This story of the "Fall" suggests the following perplexing questions: (1) How could Adam and Eve have been free to choose when God had given them desires to eat a certain fruit, which he had caused to grow, and when he had also provided a serpent, "more subtil than any beast of the field," to tempt the woman? (2) Did God intend the fruit to be eaten? If yes, Adam and Eve committed no sin in partaking of it; if no, they acted in opposition to the plans of an omnipotent God. (3) Who created the serpent? If God, then he was responsible for the results; if, however, the serpent was not created by God, he was not the creator of all things. (4) If God were correct in saying that everything he had made was "very good" (Genesis i. 31), how did the serpent become bad? (5) How could Eve know, before she acquired knowledge, that the tree "was to be desired to make one wise" (Genesis iii. 6)? Would not this have been putting the effect before the cause? (6) If the plan were fore-ordained "before the foundation of the world," how was it possible for events to have happened differently from what they did?

What is termed "God's foreknowledge" is another most perplexing theory, inasmuch as it appears to us that, if he knew that a certain event would happen, that event must take place. We think it was Charles Southwell who wrote: "It has often been asserted that the events fore-known by God are certain, but not necessary. Those who say this would do well to consider its absurdity, which is, indeed, very evident. For, if the existence of a future event be certain, is its non-existence in the course of things possible? If its non-existence is not possible, how is the existence of the event contingent? And if its non-existence be possible, how is the existence of the event certain? And if the existence of the event be uncertain, how can the knowledge of its existence be certain?" We commend this foreknowledge puzzle to the attention of modern defenders of Christianity. No marvel that the orthodox doctrines of the Christian faith are being rapidly given up by the intelligent thinkers of to-day. Equally puzzling is the doctrine of predestination, which, if true, renders the freedom of the will an impossibility. For, if God predestined man to a certain condition, and knew that he would adopt a particular course, how could freedom of the will be exercised?

What does the free-will theory imply? Why this: That will, or volition, is a free cause—that is, a cause which is not an effect; a supposition which, to the human mind, is entirely incomprehensible. Sir W. Hamilton says: "Moral liberty does not merely consist in the power of doing what we will, but in the power of willing what we will." If this be so, the question arises, What is this "willing" power, and where is it located? Is it an entity that controls volition? If so, upon what does this power depend? Even Hamilton admits: "How the will can possibly be free must remain to us, under the present limitation of our faculties, wholly incomprehensible. We are unable to conceive an absolute commencement; we cannot, therefore, conceive a free volition." In our

opinion, absolute freedom of the will is impossible; for, if a person has the power to call up a desire by the will, it is certain that some prior desire induced him to do so. What, therefore, caused *that* desire? Suppose an individual says he wills to do a thing, and he does it, he must have had an inclination, or he would not have thus willed and acted. Hence some inclination must have preceded the will, and clearly the will cannot be the cause of that which precedes itself in point of time, and to which, in fact, it owes its existence. According to the free-will perplexity, a man can choose what he likes; but how can he do this when man inherits certain mental and bodily tendencies, or if he has a defective brain or a diseased body? Besides, it is an admitted fact that the capacities of men vary in every race, and that each person's will-power is affected by the nature and extent of his mental capacity. The will of a Newton would differ widely from that of a savage; but why? Simply because the influences that called forth the will in the two cases were of a different kind. The history of the human race proves, to our mind, that there is no universal power of thought and action as is implied by free will. The conditions that produced Napoleon, who was the scourge of Europe, did not produce Washington, who was the deliverer of his nation. Here we recognise the operation of human causes; in the one case in a passion for military glory, and in the other in a love of national freedom.

It is contended by orthodox believers that man feels that he is free; and no doubt this is true. But the point is, free to do what? Simply to act in accordance with his volition, not to cause the volition itself—that is, an effect which is governed by motives and controlled by surrounding circumstances. As Tuttle points out, the human being, physically and mentally matured, is the representative of every law and condition which has ever acted on him or his progenitors, *ad infinitum*. In him they are not only individualised, they are *centrestantialised*. He exists because of their action; he is as they have made him. In this sense man is a creature of circumstances. So far as these forces and conditions acted previous to his birth, he is not a free agent, nor is he in his relation to the fixed action of the great forces of nature. But on the circumstances which surround his maturity he acts by virtue of his inherent selfhood, the resultant of all previous conditions which make up that selfhood. In this view he may be considered free, for what we call a man is nothing more nor less than the aggregate of forces and conditions, many of which we understand, and many of which we do not understand. He is free, just as his organisation, representative of all previous conditions and forces, will allow. This freedom is quite distinct from the dogmatical tenet of free-agency, inasmuch as it regards man's existence as an effect becoming a cause, and not a self-existent cause.

Besides, the Christian theory of the freedom of the will is a premium upon indifference and delay in reformation. For, if a person can will to act in one particular manner at any moment, he may lead a life of rascality, and repent only when he thinks his career is approaching its end. Hence we read:

While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.

Such a believer in free will, having, perhaps, spent three-score years and ten in pursuing a course of conduct neither creditable to himself nor useful to others, may delude himself by supposing that at the last moments of his existence he can undergo an entire change of character, and then

Clap his glad wings, and tower away,
To mingle with the blaze of day.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

The Worth of Life.

The value of earthly life has been, and is, often obscured. A certain kind of human conduct in the long run tends to obscure it. This course of conduct has obtained, and for the evolutionist shall retain, the name of *unrighteousness*. The opposite course of conduct has obtained, and for the evolutionist shall retain, the name of *righteousness*, the meaning and value whereof is, that in measure of its practice its broad and certain outcome is to make life ever better and better worth living.—L. S. Bevington.

A CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL.

DID you ever visit a Christian hospital? Well, no! I did not think there is such a thing. Let us try to imagine one.

As a Christian is forbidden to lay up treasures upon earth, and even to take any thought for the morrow; and as he is forbidden to labor for the bread that perisheth, a Christian hospital could not be a building of any description—unless, by the way, we consider it a spiritual building, a house not made with hands. You see, bricks and mortar cannot be made or procured without a great deal of earthly labor, which, to use Scripture lingo, may also be “devilish.” Stones require to be quarried; timber must be felled, dried, and sawn; and all these materials require a great deal of labor to remove them to the place of erection, and more labour still to turn them into a building.

It is clear, therefore, that Christians could never themselves get together the materials and erect a building without disobeying their Master's commands, and risking his heaviest and direst vengeance. Because, you see, at any moment of their lives the Lord Jesus may descend from heaven with a shout; and if he should come to judgment and find Christians working at worldly things, instead of watching for their Lord, as he so positively commanded them, he will “cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites.” And you do not need to be told that no real Christian would risk anything so serious as all that. No, he is so intent upon watching for the coming of Christ that he has not a moment to spare for anything but religious duties; and is even afraid to sleep, lest he should be found in that state when Gabriel's trumpet shall blow.

Consequently, Christians can never erect a building; and their hospitals must be in the open air, with the ground for the floor, the clouds and sky for roof and ceiling, and plenty of ventilation for the patients. Their only light will be the sun, moon, and stars, except when a bright angel shall visit them, or the Devil come and glare upon them with his blazing eyes, sparkling horns, etc.

Some might be tempted to say that the Christian might buy for money what he himself could not or would not make, etc. But, nay! the true Christian parts with all his wealth in becoming a Christian. He cannot be one without doing so. “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke xiv. 33; read the context). A true Christian would as soon be found by the coming Christ committing murder or adultery as in possession of money or wealth.

There will be no stretchers on which to carry the patients to the Christian hospital, for to make such things would require unchristian work. For the same reason there will be no beds or furniture of any kind on the ground, except what nature supplies.

Drugs and surgical instruments and appliances will be entirely wanting, because contrary to Bible teaching, which admits of no cure of a purely worldly nature, none at all. King Asa was afflicted in his feet; the poor man applied to the physicians, and died. He did not apply to Dr. Jehovah, you see, as he should have done; and that gentleman, out of mere rivalry, killed him. And that is sufficient warning to all true Christians not to have anything at all to do with doctors, except they are of the purely spiritual kind.

And, besides all that, the blessed New Testament contains one prescription for every disease whatsoever; and that prescription can never fail. Here it is, *in extenso*: “Is any sick among you; let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James v. 14, 15).

There is the prescription, drawn up by the Holy Ghost himself, after an eternity's thought and careful study. You see, it covers every kind of sickness, no matter what. And it is warranted to cure, and that, too, on the spot.

And let me say that I never knew it fail in true Christian hands. Of course, if you are only nominal Christian it will not succeed; but if you are of the genuine type the prescription must succeed. If you do not believe me, you can surely believe the Lord's own word and

promise! No! Then you are no Christian. Kindly step aside; I am speaking only to the faithful.

Take a look at the prescription; you need not fear Christ will come before you get through it. If he should, you can drop it and look up as if you had been all along expecting him. You are to call in the elders. The elders may be of any character, bad or good—“boom” swindlers; owners of property used for immoral purposes; magistrates who pack the bench for a bribe; judges who act unjustly; lying journalists or lying pulpites; adulterers, fornicators, thieves, or what not. The only duty enjoined on you is to call in the elders, not to inquire into their character.

The only difficulty at all in the prescription is the question of the oil. We are not told what sort of oil it should be—train oil, olive oil, cod-liver oil, oil of cloves, colza oil, turps, eucalyptus oil, kerosene, or what. My sanctified opinion is that it does not matter what the oil is; for, after all, it is not that which is to effect the cure, but the prayer of faith. I should say, then, just take whatever oil you have, or leave it to the elders to bring some with them. Many of them are oily enough themselves to meet the case.

The only other portion of the prescription which requires elucidation is the anointing. Is it to be partial, local, or all over the body? Here we have nothing to guide us; and therefore, I presume, it does not much matter. The quantity of oil to be used is not specified; therefore use as little as is necessary. Let the elders put a little on the tip of the nose, on the lips, on the forehead, and on the tip of each ear—where the patient has two of those appendages; and let one of the elders do this while the others apply the prayer of faith. The process will succeed before you scarcely know where you are.

The above is, I think, a very correct, scriptural, and godly description of a truly Christian hospital, and the mode of cure thereat practised and followed. If I am at all in error, the Christians can correct me from their own Divine word; and I shall then feel obliged to them.

When such a hospital is once established it will be a boon to humanity, will it not? Dr. Bevan, Dr. Carr, and Dr. Goe will recommend and support it, I am sure, and invariably go there for cure when they are ill—no matter what the sin may be for which they are afflicted.

Besides being so extremely useful in the way just hinted at, how soon such a hospital would destroy all unbelief and convert all Atheists, Infidels, Sceptics, etc., to the true faith!

What can be the reason that the Christians do not set up or establish or inaugurate such a hospital? Are they afraid? Are they in league with the doctors and nurses, who get an income from the present institutions? or are they as sceptical as I am as to the virtues of the prescription? Do they really think Jesus and the Holy Ghost blundered? Eh, what! does James and Co.'s prescription really belong to the category of superstitions? Is that so? Do you tell me that modern scientific treatment of disease is really superior to God's Bible method? Have you more faith in well-trained doctors than in elders? in drugs than the prayer of faith?

Ah, well, my Christian enemy, I congratulate you on your loss of faith. But why do you still keep up your hypocritical profession of faith in what you heartily despise? And why do you hate and slander me for openly repudiating the very superstitions you secretly despise as well as I?—you contemptible, hypocritical coward!

—*Liberator*.

JOS. SYMES.

DON'T NEAD NO JURNALS.—The following interesting reply, says the *Pharmaceutical Era*, was returned by a Minnesota doctor to a circular letter soliciting subscriptions to a certain medical journal in the United States: “Your copy of the — Journal come, and the letter to—askin' me to send fifty cens and git it fur a year. I don't nead no jurnals. When I git a tuff case I go off inter sum secrit plase and tell the lord all about it and wate fur him to put inter my mind what ter do. That's bettern jurnals and nsyklopedes and such. If we hed more lord trustin docters and less colle weed fare better. The lord noes morn all the docters if we go to him fur noledge it ill be bettern jurnals. I ternally in the lord, A CHRISTUN DOCTER. P.S.—I've been tist medisen morn fifty yeers. You can publish this letter if you want ter.”

“VICTORY OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY METHODS.”*

By the new race of Christian scholars it has been clearly shown that the first three Gospels, which, down to the close of the last century, were so constantly declared to be three independent testimonies agreeing as to the events recorded, are neither independent of each other nor in that sort of agreement which was formerly asserted. All Biblical scholars of any standing, even the most conservative, have come to admit that all three took their rise in the same original sources, growing by the accretions sure to come as time went on—accretions sometimes useful and often beautiful, but in no inconsiderable degree ideas and even narratives inherited from older religions; it is also fully acknowledged that to this growth process are due certain contradictions which cannot otherwise be explained. As to the fourth Gospel, exquisitely beautiful as large portions of it are, there has been growing steadily and irresistibly the conviction, even among the most devout scholars, that it represents an infusion of Greek conceptions into Hebraism, and that its final form is mainly due to some gifted representative or representatives of the Alexandrian school. Bitter as the resistance to this view has been, it has during the last years of the nineteenth century won its way more and more to acknowledgment. A careful examination made in 1893 by a competent Christian scholar showed facts which are best given in his own words, as follows:—

“In the period of thirty years ending in 1860, of the fifty great authorities in this line, *four to one* were in favour of the Johannine authorship. Of those who in that period had advocated this traditional position one quarter—and certainly the very greatest—finally changed their position to the side of a late date and non-Johannine authorship. Of those who have come into this field of scholarship since about 1860, some forty men of the first class, two-thirds reject the traditional theory wholly or very largely. Of those who have contributed important articles to the discussion from about 1880 to 1890, about *two to one* reject the Johannine authorship of the Gospel in its present shape—that is to say, while forty years ago great scholars were *four to one* in favour of, they are now *two to one* against, the claim that the apostle John wrote this gospel as we have it. Again, one half of those on the conservative side to-day—scholars like Weiss, Beyschlag, Sanday, and Reynolds—admit the existence of a dogmatic intent and an ideal element in this Gospel, so that we do not have Jesus's thought in his exact words, but only in substance.”

In 1881 came an event of great importance as regards the development of a more frank and open dealing with scriptural criticism. In that year appeared the Revised Version of the New Testament. It was exceedingly cautious and conservative; but it had the vast merit of being absolutely conscientious. One thing showed, in a striking way, ethical progress in theological methods. Although all but one of the English revisers represented Trinitarian bodies, they rejected the two great proof texts which had so long been accounted essential bulwarks of Trinitarian doctrine. Thus disappeared at last from the epistle of St. John the text of the Three Witnesses, which had for centuries held its place in spite of its absence from all the earlier important manuscripts, and of its rejection in later times by Erasmus, Luther, Isaac Newton, Porson, and a long line of the greatest biblical scholars. And with this was thrown out the other like unto it in spurious origin and zealous intent, that interpolation of the word “God” in the 16th verse of the third chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy, which had for ages served as a warrant for condemning some of the noblest of Christians, even such men as Newton and Milton and Locke and Priestley and Channing.

Indeed, so honest were the revisers that they substituted the correct reading of Luke ii. 33 in place of the time-honored corruption in the King James version, which had been thought necessary to safeguard the dogma of the virgin birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus came the true reading, “His father and his mother,” instead of the old piously fraudulent words, “Joseph and his mother.” And even more important service to the new and better growth of Christianity was the virtual setting aside of the last twelve verses of the Gospel according to St. Mark. For among these stood that sentence which has cost the world

more innocent blood than any other—the words, “He that believeth not shall be damned.”

Most valuable, too, have been studies during the latter part of the nineteenth century upon the formation of the canon of Scripture. The result of these has been to substitute something far better for that conception of our biblical literature, as forming one book handed out of the clouds by the Almighty, which had been so long practically the accepted view among probably the majority of Christians. Reverend scholars have demonstrated our sacred literature to be a growth in obedience to simple laws, natural and historical; they have shown how some books of the Old Testament were accepted as sacred centuries before our era, and how others gradually gained sanctity, in some cases only acquiring it long after the establishment of the Christian Church. The same slow growth has also been shown in the New Testament canon. It has been demonstrated that the selection of the books composing it was a gradual process, and, indeed, that the rejection of some books and the acceptance of others was accidental, if anything is accidental.

So, too, scientific biblical research has, as we have seen, been obliged to admit the existence of much mythical and legendary matter, as a setting for the great truths, not only of the Old Testament, but of the New. It has also shown, by the comparative study of literatures, the process by which some books were compiled and recompiled, adorned with beautiful utterances, strengthened or weakened by interpolations expressing the views of the possessors or transcribers, and assigned to personages who could not possibly have written them. The showing forth of these things has greatly weakened that sway of mere dogma which has so obscured the simple teachings of Christ himself; for it has shown that the more we know of our sacred books, the less certain we become as to the authenticity of proof texts, and it has disengaged more and more, as the only valuable residuum, like the mass of gold at the bottom of the crucible, the personality and general teaching and ideals of the blessed founder of Christianity. The new scholarship has shown that even such absolute contradictions as that between the date assigned for the crucifixion in the first three Gospels and that given in the fourth, and other discrepancies hardly less serious, do not affect the historical character of the essential part of the narrative. Even the hopelessly conflicting genealogies of the Savior, and the evidently mythical accretions about the simple facts of his birth and life, are thus full of interest when taken as a natural literary development.

Vast masses of myth, legend, marvel, and dogmatic assertion, coming into this atmosphere, have been dissolved, and are now dissolving quietly away like icebergs drifted into the Gulf Stream. In earlier days, when some critic in advance of his time insisted that Moses could not have written an account embracing the circumstances of his own death, it was sufficient to answer that Moses was a prophet; if attention was called to the fact that the great early prophets, by all which they did and did not do, showed that there could not have existed in their time any “Levitical code,” a sufficient answer was “mystery”; and if the discrepancy was noted between the two accounts of creation in Genesis, or between the genealogies or the dates of the crucifixion in the Gospels, the cogent reply was “infidelity.” But the thinking world has at last been borne, by the general development of a scientific atmosphere, beyond that kind of refutation.

—Professor A. White, “Popular Science Monthly,”
condensed by New York “Public Opinion.”

Bible Slavery.

“If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. *Notwithstanding*, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, *for he is his money*” (Exodus xxi. 20, 21). “I shall never forget the revulsion of feeling with which a very intelligent native, with whose help I was translating these last words into the Zulu tongue, first heard them as words said to be uttered by the same great and gracious Being whom I was teaching him to trust in and adore. His whole soul revolted against the notion that the Great and Blessed God, the Merciful Father of all mankind, would speak of a servant or maid as mere ‘money,’ and allow a horrible crime to go unpunished because the victim of the brutal outrage had survived a few hours.”—Bishop Colenso.

* New Chapters in “The Warfare of Science.”

THE RIVAL RELIGIONISTS.

["Love ye one another?" See reports of recent Presbytery meetings. Something like the following may soon be looked for if the present keen competition is maintained.]

"HERE y'are, gents! We're a-waiting!
Ladies! *Won't* you 'ave a seat?
Pure, Refined, and Elevating!
Our's a worship can't be beat!
Cushioned pews and books provided;
Shorter sermons don't exist;
And the grand new organ's guided
By a long-*aired* organist!"

"Hi! hi! hi! Now here's a chance, sirs!
That there fellow's talking trash!
Pay your seat-rent in advance, sirs;
Liberal discount off for cash!
Ladies, come, your hearts 'll tingle!
Take a trial quarter—do!
Our young minister is single:
Wants a wife; now, why not *you*?"

"This way! this way with your money!
No collections; no bazaars!
Sermons up to date and funny;
All the choir composed of stars!
Husband, miss? A wife? In here, sir!
We supply 'em plain or toff;
From our membership last year, sir,
Twenty couple 'knocked it off!"

(OMNES.)

"We're the only 'chosen people'!
Do not be misled although
Every cock on every steeple
Calls you with its canting crow!
Please don't let your order pass us
For your last, long earthly tour;
Bookings made to suit all classes;
We are bound for Jordan—sure!"

—*Glasgow Evening News.*

ACID DROPS.

THE London correspondent of the *Western Morning News* is not delighted with the "Tom Paine" Exhibition. In his opinion, the author of the *Age of Reason* and the *Rights of Man* was "too much of a bully and too violent in his tone." Anyhow, Paine could write English, which is more than we can say of this anonymous scribbler, whose opinions may be a theme of laughter to his friends. "Too much of a bully" is a ridiculous expression. It implies that Paine ought to have been just enough of a bully—which, as our old friend Euclid says, is absurd.

Thomas Paine was a bully, was he? What, then, are we to think of Jesus Christ? Search the writings of Thomas Paine from beginning to end, and see if you can find anything to equal the virulent abuse which Jesus Christ heaped upon the heads of his religious rivals in Jerusalem. Thomas Paine never called his opponents "vipers" and "children of hell."

The Lord Mayor of London, addressing the London Rifle Brigade, at a prize distribution, told his hearers that their first duty was to their Creator, and the next to their country. We understand that the Rifle Brigade are ready to shoot for their country. We did not know that they were also—and first of all—ready to shoot for their Creator.

The Lord Mayor sang the praises of England, in opposition to those unpatriotic persons who think other countries are in some respects wiser and happy. Why, said the Lord Mayor, they have everything in this country to make them happy. "Everything" is a large order. No doubt the Lord Mayor has everything to make him happy, but how about the million paupers, the myriads out of work, and the thousands who are perishing of destitution in the midst of plenty?

Mr. Hiram S. Maxim, the scientist, mentions that Mr. Davidson, a Scotch engineer, who spent a long time in China, relates that he had never known a native Chinese Christian who was a Christian five minutes after the missionary had ceased to pay him; that the missionaries could have just as many converts as they wanted in China, provided that they paid the price. The regular scale of prices was about three dollars a week for a clever and active

Chinaman to go about and secure subjects for conversion; and the regular pay to converts was two dollars a month.

An Austrian officer in the service of the Chinese Government, speaking of the missionary question in China, said that he had never known of an honest Chinaman who was a Christian; that there was no such thing as converting the middle or better class of Chinaman. All the converts were of the lower class, and very poor people; they were Christians simply because it paid them to be Christians; their Christianity was on a strictly cash basis; it was simply a matter of how much they could make.

Bishop Moorhouse, in addressing the Manchester annual meeting of the S.P.G., let out a little fact concerning missionary enterprise in India. He mentioned that those of pure Aryan race, Brahmins and Rajpoots, were hardly as yet touched by Christian influence. Christians often boast of their converts in India without telling the classes from which they are drawn—viz., the aboriginal devil-worshippers, or the lowest castes, who find material welfare in a change of faith. The fact that Christianity succeeds with these, while failing with the higher castes of Hindus and with Moslems, determines its own real status.

A lady South African correspondent of the *Sketch* says she emphatically endorses the opinion of every colonial, that the missionised African is far worse than the raw heathen native. She says: "Ask any business man or woman who has lived in the Transvaal or Cape Colony why a raw Kaffir is physically and mentally and naturally pure, helpful, willing, and honest, and why that same Kaffir, having gone to some mission station to be educated, comes back supercilious, independent, lazy, and often dishonest, you can get no answer, simply a shrug and 'I don't know, but it is so.'" The secret probably is that the Christian is told he can lay his sins on Jesus, and immediately sets about copying Christian vices, that Jesus may have a good opportunity of displaying his wondrous love for sinners.

Another factor, says this South African correspondent, is that the Dutch Boer, filled with psalms and hymns, repeating texts by the yard, and going in for abundant services and prayer-meetings, is one of the most despicable of creatures. The average Boer is a sanctimonious rascal, who "will lie, will cheat, will slander to the very utmost, quoting Scripture all the time." The Kaffir, seeing Christianity is a mere hypocrisy among its professors, naturally also becomes a hypocrite when he becomes a Christian.

The Provincial Missionary Conference of South Africa has been discussing the question of the polygamy of converts. The Bishop of Bloemfontein, supported by the Bishop of Lebombo, moved that the subject be considered with closed doors; and, according to the *Natal Mercury*, the opinion was freely expressed that, before a native convert could be admitted to the catechumenate, he should be required to divorce all his wives but one, and put them, with their offspring, away from him.

This attitude has been a usual one with missionaries, but it is in accordance neither with humanity nor scripture. Jesus lived in a polygamous society, but he said nothing against polygamy; and Paul's injunction, that a bishop should be the husband of one wife, does not apply to catechumens, and has been interpreted as meaning that he must have one *at least*.

Describing a beautiful Chinese temple at Los Angeles, California, a local paper says: "In a corner is another stand, containing a bass drum and a heavy bell, used to wake the god or call his attention when worshippers are present." Probably the bells on the dress of Jewish priests, and the bell sounded at the elevation of the Mass, were originally for the same purpose.

A meeting of converted people was held at Krugersdorp, to which no unconverted people were admitted. Some of the latter requested admittance. A battle royal ensued, in which the church militant was victorious. Tall language was used on both sides, but at last the sinners carried the case before the Assistant Landdrost, who fined two of the saints £5 each, with the alternative of eight days' imprisonment, four days on spare diet.—*Natal Advertiser.*

In Maritzburg they had not only special prayers for rain, but also against the plague of locusts. The Rev. Mr. Heard, Baptist pastor, refused to pray, saying: "My idea is that the inhabitants of this or any country should first of all have done their level best to destroy the locusts, and then ask God to bless the effort." This minister's improvement on the old theology seems to be that we should act as if there were no God, but talk as if there were one.

The prayers for rain have excited much controversy in South Africa. The Rev. D. P. Faure, of the Free Protestant

Church, says: "People might just as well pray for the direct miracle that their crops should be saved without the intervention of rain; but they would no more do that than pray for a broken leg to be miraculously set. Prayer for material blessings—the mere asking for favors—he regarded as degrading. The only legitimate prayer was to ask for spiritual blessings." But surely it is as illogical to expect spiritual miracles as material ones.

"Agnostic" had a good letter on the subject in the *Diggers' News*. He pointed out that the reasoning of believers is like the gambler's "heads I win, tails you lose." All facts that tell for their case are allowed to count, and all that tell against it are excluded. If what they pray for happens, that proves the efficacy of prayer; and if it does not happen, that proves nothing at all. Such is the logic of superstition in all ages.

A writer in Mrs. Bloomfield Moore's cranky *New Science Review* argues that the only escape from Materialism is belief in a fourth dimension. What a pity these Spiritists cannot remove from a world where the most perceptible dimensions are the length, breadth, and thickness of their own understandings.

Rubinstein's sacred opera, "Christus," has been performed at Bremen. The authorities ordered that no applause should be given during the performance, as that would be a desecration of the sacred piece.

As late as 1850 smoking was allowed in some churches in Wales. The communion-table stood in the aisle, and the farmers were in the habit of putting their hats upon it, and when the sermon began they lit their pipes and smoked, but without any idea of irreverence.

An American paper says: "There is no error which prevails more widely, even among educated people, than the belief that a man has one rib more in his right side than in his left, the deficiency being supposed to have been inherited from Adam. As a fact, men and women have each twenty-four ribs, twelve on each side."

A pretty quarrel over Hell is raging in the Midlands. It appears that the Rev. Kenneth Bond, minister of the Baptist Church at Swadlincote, came to the conclusion that there was no eternal punishment. Some of the Church members resented their preacher's heterodoxy. It made them quite uncomfortable to think there was any prospect of nobody going to the everlasting bonfire in perpetuity. Accordingly, a meeting was called to consider the situation, and a vote was taken by ballot, which gave the non-everlasting hellites a chance of supporting their minister without being discovered. Twelve voted in favor of Mr. Bond's resignation, and sixty-two against it. Only ten remained neutral, so that the majority was triumphant and decisive.

A number of local preachers "of various denominations" met at Gresley Wesleyan Church to sit (metaphorically) upon Mr. Bond and defend the grand old doctrine of eternal punishment. They expressed "in the strongest possible manner" their disagreement with Mr. Bond's views, and emphatically declared their belief that "such views are directly opposed to the teaching of the Word of God." We hope this quarrel will continue. The more Hell is talked about the sooner it will be extinguished.

Eminent German critics have been deploring the fact that the literature of Germany is fast becoming paralysed, while that of France shows every sign of vitality. Herr Litzmann, professor at Bonn, says: "The literature of Germany is neither hot nor cold, but dreadfully commonplace and destitute of individuality." It has had no poet since Freligrath; no philosopher since Schopenhauer. Meanwhile every person who shows the slightest individuality is in danger of prosecution for *lesé majesty*—the latest victim being the head of the ethical societies.

A rival contest in clairvoyance between J. B. Tetlow, a Spiritist medium, and Professor Steen, an avowed deceptionist, took place at the Manchester Free Trade Hall. A stake of £100 was said to be involved, but the affair ended in a squabble, and the *Sunday Chronicle* says: "As a contest it was little else than a farce." What else was to be expected?

Professor A. A. Bevan gives Professor Sayce a good dressing in the columns of the *Contemporary Review*. He mentions that his conclusions as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch are rejected by the most eminent archaeologists, such as Schrader, Haupt, Winckler, and Maspero. The last, one of the most eminent Egyptologists, endorses Wellhausen, and holds that the Jehovistic portion of the Pentateuch was composed about 840 B.C.; the Deuteronomic Code, dating from the time of Josiah and the Priestly Code, being post-exilic. In regard to the author of the

Priestly Code of the Bible, Maspero says in so many words: "Where the facts do not conform to his design, he abridges, suppresses, alters, and lends them a character purely ideal, or changes them so that they no longer respond to reality" (*Hist. Anc. des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 395; 1893). When such eminent archaeologists differ, for Sayce to claim his as the verdict of archaeology is simply orthodox cheek, and confirms an opinion given us by an eminent Egyptologist, derogatory to his character and his scholarship.

Professor Bevan points out that the archaeological evidence relating to the Old Testament depends, in most cases, upon the identification of proper names—that is to say, a person, nation, or place mentioned in an inscription is *conjectured* to be identical with some person, nation, or place mentioned in the Bible. The *Church Times* (Nov. 29) showed how shaky were the identifications of Professor Sayce, and Professor Bevan goes still farther. What Sayce reads as Eri-aku, and identifies with Arioch, some of the best Assyriologists hold should be pronounced Rim-Sin. Indeed, many signs can be read so variously that such conjectured identifications must ever be extremely dubious.

Professor Sayce and others insist on identifying the nation called Kheta by the Egyptians, with the Hittites of the Old Testament. Yet one of the most learned archaeologists in this country, Dr. E. Wallis Budge, has recently stated that for this theory there is not, in his opinion, "the slightest evidence."

Professor Bevan says, and proves, that Sayce's "knowledge of Biblical criticism is altogether superficial." Nay, he shows this is the most charitable construction to be put upon the fact that he ascribes to "the critics," as a body, "opinions which no critic of repute has ever dreamt of maintaining." Sayce's inference, that Moses must have written because the Egyptians and Assyrians had a knowledge of writing, is shown to be inconclusive. "Even at the present day it is quite usual in the East to find utterly illiterate tribes living in close proximity to great centres of civilisation." Of course Sayce never attempted to touch the question whether such regulations as those given in Leviticus could have been promulgated in the wilderness.

Sir Henry Howorth goes farther than Professor Bevan and other critics. He claims to show that the Septuagint represents a far earlier state of the Hebrew than the Masoretic text of the Old Testament, the received version, which he believes was arranged and published by Akiba and his pupils at Jamnia in the first centuries after the Christian era.; that, in particular, the previous continuous work of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, was then touched up and altered; and that the first book of Esdras, in the Apocrypha, enables us to partly reconstruct the text of that work before it was tampered with and altered.

In Professor Sayce's inaugural address, delivered before the ninth International Congress of Orientalists, he himself pointed to the difficulties of deciphering cuneiform inscriptions. He said: "Sounds which were certainly distinct in Assyrian pronunciation are confounded together in writing, while sounds are separated in writing which may have been identical in pronunciation." Add to this that every character possesses more than one phonetic value, and the difficulty of identifying proper names with certainty must be apparent.

Mr. F. C. Conybeare, M.A., writes in the *Expositor* for December on "The Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark's Gospel." He mentions that they do not appear in the Armenian versions until a copy of the year 989 A.D., in which they are said to have been written by one Ariston, the Elder. He holds, however, that they were part of the fifth-century Armenian version, and were afterwards erased.

Mr. Conybeare mentions incidentally that old Armenian codices preserve very old features of the New Testament text. Thus in Matthew ii. 9 the Moscow codex of the year 887 reads: "The star.....stood still over the cave where was the child." Now, Justin Martyr, Origen, and the Proto-evangelion, ascribed to James, all speak of Jesus as born in a cave like Mithras and other solar heroes.

Dr. A. D. Watson writes on the psychology of religious revivals in the *Canadian Methodist Review*. He broadly hints that what the Methodists often take for the workings of the Holy Ghost, such as "seizures, trances, and convulsions," are really signs of religious insanity. He says: "It will thus be understood why the objectionable features of revivals are so frequent among the unlettered aboriginal peoples, when missionaries go among them. Indeed, excessive outbursts of feeling, manifested in hysterical proportions, almost invariably occur among persons of an excitable temperament, among those of weak will, or those of a debilitated physical constitution."

"Given a number of such persons in a series of meetings, and if the evangelist should appeal chiefly to motives of fear or to the intensely emotional part of the sensibility, rather than to urge the case mainly upon its reasonable and righteous grounds; if the evangelist have a powerfully magnetic and commanding presence, and insist on certain forms without clearly defining that obedience to the Lord, rather than the mere performance of the evangelist's desire, constitutes duty; further, if it be understood or surmised that there would be general approval of any exceptional occurrence, such as prostration or highly wrought or excited movements, these demonstrations are pretty sure to occur."

A good many sky-pilots have reiterated what has never been questioned—viz., that writing was well known in the time of Moses. But they do not tell their auditors the further fact that writing was in existence long anterior to the time assigned to Adam. Chinese documents go back to about 3000 B.C., while some say 7000 B.C. Mr. C. J. Ball, M.A., who has done much to identify Chinese with the Accadian language, says of that tongue: "Five thousand years before our era it already possessed a system of writing which the earliest existing documents prove to have been of pictorial origin."

The murderer Durrant has not yet paid the penalty of his crimes. The body of Blanche Lamont, a Sunday-school girl, was found decomposed on the belfry of the Emanuel Baptist Church, San Francisco, on April 14, and Durrant, who was an usher of the church and a pious superintendent of the Sunday-school, was seen taking her in there on April 3. His trial lasted from July 22 to November 1, when the jury unanimously balloted him as guilty after five minutes' consultation. Another victim was found in the church, and this is occasioning the delay. Durrant went on teaching and attending prayer-meeting, as the district attorney said, "while his victim rotted in the spire that pointed its slender finger to the sky." He was a leading figure in the church, and may point the warning that it is not always safe for young girls to accompany pious teachers into sacred buildings, even in broad daylight.

A telegram from Columbia, South Carolina, says that four prominent whites tortured to death a young negro who was suspected of stealing a Bible. In their zeal for religion, they murdered his aged mother likewise.

The man Covington, who was executed at Bedford for the murder of his girl cousin, spent most of his time in prison in reading religious books. As he made a most edifying ending, he has doubtless gone to join Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the mansions of the blest.

The *Daily News* points out that the State contributes £311,383 to Roman Catholic schools, a sum sufficient to pay the whole cost of the secular education given therein. Yet Lord Chief Justice Russell abuses his office by joining in the cry for more State support without State control.

Mr. Justice Day, charging the grand jury at Lincolnshire Assizes, said that perjury was widely prevalent. "It was shocking to think that so many persons called on God to witness that they would speak the truth when they were present for the express purpose of falsehood."

A friend has sent us a little pocket edition of *The Life of David*, by Peter Annet, who was imprisoned for "blasphemy" in last century, and was mentioned in terms of praise by Voltaire. This edition was published by T. Williams, Broadway, Blackfriars, in 1796. It is bound in old tree calf, and the binder—either personally or by instigation—has put a stroke of genius on the cover, which bears the title: "Life of a Scoundrel."

The number of deaths in India caused by bites of wild animals and reptiles is on the increase. The deaths from snake bites last year were 21,000, and in the same period nearly 120,000 deadly snakes were killed. Wild animals caused the death of 2,800 persons in the same year; the tigers and leopards more than four hundred; the wolves, 175; bears, 121; and elephants, 68. On the other hand, nearly 15,000 wild beasts were killed, including nearly 1,300 tigers, and more than 4,000 leopards. In addition to the loss of human life, nearly ninety thousand head of cattle were destroyed. The bounties offered by the Government seem ineffectual to decrease the number of wild animals. The superstitions of the natives tend to perpetuate their scourge.

The Rev. Frank Hyatt Smith, pastor of the North Avenue Congregational Church at Cambridge, Mass., has been arrested for sending obscene and scurrilous post-cards to members of his congregations. They did not consist of Bible texts, but were to the full as offensive.

The law case between the rival infidel-slayers at Glasgow

promises to be very amusing. The pursuer is alleged to have been converted several times. At one time he posed as a converted clown, and after this he was convicted of an assault on a constable at Bristol in October, 1892. He accuses the defender of gross falsehood and calumny.

Elder Ebert, of the Seventh Day Adventists, says that crack-brained John on Patmos referred to the Mohammedan rule in his ninth chapter; and he thinks that the waning power of the Turk is a sure sign of the speedy advent of the much-delayed Jesus. It seems the third part of men are to be slain (Revelation ix. 15), and this means the destruction of the Moslems and other infidels. Hallelujah!

Those sanguine individuals known as Adventists may glean some information about the probable fate of Christ, and the reason for his non-reappearance up to date, from a prayerful consideration of two passages in Matthew. According to Matthew x. 34, Christ says: "I came not to bring peace, but a sword." In Matthew xxvi. 52 he supplements this statement with another: "Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Brethren, what do you think about it?—*Boston Investigator*.

Luther R. Marsh, an aged Spiritist who resides with Mrs. Huyler, a medium, at Middleton, told a correspondent as follows: "The spirit of Henry Ward Beecher informed Mrs. Huyler that he (Beecher) would bring before her the spirits of the patriarchs, in order that she might secure from them evidence to establish the authenticity of the Scriptures." This is the very thing that is wanted. Profane sceptics have been suggesting that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are simply mythical ancestors of a Semitic tribe, and Samson no more than a sun-hero. If Mrs. Huyler will only trot their spirits out and have them photographed, all the world will have a chance of being convinced.

The *Daily News* recently made the following statement in a leading article on Mr. Lecky and the Dublin University election: "Freethinkers have in all ages, and for obvious reasons, supported the principle of ecclesiastical establishment. Establishment and endowment have, in their eyes, the transcendent merit of putting down enthusiasm, of keeping religion in its proper place."

This statement was caught up as "jam" by the *Liberator*, the organ of the Liberation Society, whose officials seem to forget that Dr. Parker and Mr. Spurgeon refused to appear at any Disestablishment meetings that were marred by the presence of Charles Bradlaugh.

Voltaire and Thomas Paine did not support a State Church; neither did Robert Owen, John Stuart Mill, or Jeremy Bentham. George Jacob Holyoake, like Charles Bradlaugh, has always opposed a State Church on principle, and the "disestablishment of religion" is one of the objects of the National Secular Society. The *Daily News* should really keep up to date.

Parsons have so long taught that the theatre is the Devil's house—in opposition to the church, which is God's—that some of their hearers have come to believe it. In fact, the Rector of Killamarsh, Derbyshire, has been unpleasantly talked of for going to the Queen's Theatre, and has deemed it necessary to write a letter to the malcontents in defence of his conduct. We hope the poor man of God will come out of it all right. A parson's business is rather a dull one—christening strange babies, marrying people who often ought to know better, attending funerals as a superior undertaker, and preaching what he frequently but half believes. It is only natural that he should yearn for a little amusement.

The Popes.

Cobbett, whose *History of the Protestant Reformation* is still largely circulated by Catholics, said of the Popes: "To support their pride they shed oceans of blood; they made weak princes the vile sport of their passions—sometimes their victims, and sometimes their executioners. Sovereigns, become their vassals, executed, with fear and trembling, the decrees of heaven pronounced against the enemies of the Holy See, which had created itself the arbiter of faith. In fact, these inhuman Pontiffs immolated to their God a thousand times more human victims than Paganism sacrificed to all its divinities" (*Register*, vol. xxvi, p. 379).

The history of mankind, if compared in long periods, shows a very slow, but still a clearly marked, improvement in the character of successive creeds; so that, if we reason from the analogy of the past, we have a right to hope that the improvement will continue, and that subsequent creeds will surpass ours.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 15, Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street (near Grey's Monument), Newcastle:—11, "Gladstone's Theology"; 3, "Huxley and Agnosticism"; 7, "Life, Death, and After."

December 22, Manchester; 29, Camberwell.

January 5, Camberwell; 12, 19, and 26, St. James's Hall.

February 2, Liverpool; 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 15 and 22, Foresters' Hall. January 12 and 13, Bolton; 19, Glasgow; 26, Edinburgh. February 2 and 16, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

PAINTER.—Your repeated subscriptions to the lecturing scheme ought to stimulate more sluggish supporters.

JOHN RICHARDS.—See paragraph.

A. J. H.—No doubt the Ethical Societies are doing good work. We wish them success in secularising morality. At the same time, that is what we have been doing all along; only, in our opinion, it cannot be done without opposing superstition.

W. ROSE.—Mr. Foote will try to let Edmonton have a course of week-night lectures in January.

A. W. B.—It is sheer hypocrisy for the apologists of Voluntary Schools (heaven save the mark!) to argue that they put no financial burden on the ratepayer. Whether the School Grants come out of the rates and taxes is all the same in the long run. The whole people have to pay.

E. SMEDLEY.—It is impossible to deal with the matter satisfactorily in this column.

D. MCINTYRE.—We know nothing of E. Foster's "Story of Lincoln's Life," which you refer to as giving some curious—and, on the face of it, ridiculous—testimonies to the Bible and Christianity. The book shall be looked up, and the matter inquired into. Look for an answer next week.

HELP ME.—We have not time to write the essay you suggest. Nor is there much room in the three verses you mention for a characteristic *Freethinker* criticism. The story of Jonathan and David is one of the prettiest in the Bible, and hardly lends itself for satire. You would find Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes* and *Bible Romances* helpful in regard to the Scripture generally. Both works are published by R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

E. G. TAYLOR.—We do not see that any reply is necessary in the *Freethinker*, unless you confine yourself to mere matters of fact. Remember the proverb about fighting the sooty.

A. H. COLEMAN.—The definition of Atheism in *Lloyd's Encyclopaedic Dictionary* is wrong, as might be expected when the editor is a clergyman. Atheism is not "Literally, disbelief in a God." Atheism means—both etymologically and philosophically—"without belief in God." The Atheist is simply unable to accept the evidences of Theism as sufficient. He is therefore "without God." The quotation from Bacon, with other passages from the same author, is dealt with in a special article in the second volume of Mr. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought*.

A. P. CARTER.—"What Becomes of the Infidel Leaders?" printed in the *Christian Million*, is really a tract by the late Rev. C. J. Whitmore. All the names are withheld, in order to deceive the public. Mr. Bradlaugh pointed out the falsehood and absurdity of this tract, as we did some years ago in the *Freethinker*. Some of the persons referred to were never converted at all, and it is ridiculous to call many of them "leaders." The footnote that "practically there is no leader now" is as true as the rest of the statements.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Hanley Branch, 6s. 7½d.; Westminster Branch, 11s.

J. P. GILMOUR.—Glad to hear you were all so pleased with Mr. Cohen at Glasgow. Professor Black's address is racy reading. It is high time that somebody told the truth about hospitals.

T. J. ROSCOLLAR.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks for your good wishes.

A. W. MARKS.—It was an absurd statement. See our comment this week. Your epithet "silly" is not too severe.

T. E. M.—Your subscription for Benevolent Fund is handed to Miss Vance. The verse shall appear. Pleased to have your opinion that the article on "Praying for Ingersoll" was "bright enough to make a dyspeptic hilarious." Mr. Lecky nowhere makes an explicit declaration of his religious views, though it is easy to see between the lines that he is a Rationalist. Even his praise of Jesus Christ, which is so often cited by Christian apologists, is quite inconsistent with a belief in the Incarnation—as hasty or dull-witted Christians fail to perceive.

A. V. W.—Thanks for your subscription to our "admirable lecturing scheme." The paper you mention must have miscarried.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Painter, £1; A. V. W., 5s. Per Miss Vance:—W. Gregory, 1s.; Isle of Dogs Progressive Club, 5s.; H. Hutchins, 1s. Per R. Forder:—W. Stewart, 1s.; J. M. L., 2s. 6d.; Le Diabolo, 3s.; R. Taylor, 1s.; R. W., 1s.

D. F. GLOAK.—Mr. Foote will visit Dundee when he goes to Scotland in February. Glad to hear Mr. Cohen has "caught on" in Scotland.

ERNEST NEWMAN.—Sorry to hear of Mr. Doeg's illness. See paragraph. Will you note that Mr. Foote has booked February 2 for Liverpool?

G. BAKER.—Thanks for cutting. Your order handed to Mr. Forder.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Arbeiter Freund—De Dageraad—Truthseeker—Christian Life—Sunday Chronicle—Natal Mercury—Natal Advertiser—Johannesburg Star—Digger's News—Critic—South American Journal—Literary Digest—Public Opinion—Liberty—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Der Freidenker—Post—Cape Argus—Grahamstown Journal—Gloucester Journal—Isle of Man Times—Glasgow Herald—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought—Manchester Courier.

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

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was an improved audience at Foresters' Hall on Sunday evening, and an improved collection towards the expenses—although a good many people must have been kept away by the bitter weather. Mr. Shallard, of the West London Branch, made an excellent chairman. The lecture on "Mr. Gladstone's Theology" was listened to most attentively, and very heartily applauded. It was followed by a few questions, but no discussion.

Mr. Foote delivers three lectures to-day (December 15) for the Newcastle Branch, in the Northumberland Hall, near Grey's monument. The last time Mr. Foote visited Newcastle it rained vehemently all the day. It is to be hoped the weather will be an improvement this time, so as to give the "saints" in the surrounding district an opportunity of attending.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures at Foresters' Hall this evening (Dec. 15), and also on the following Sunday. Mr. Parris delivers the last lecture there (for the present) on December 29.

Mr. Cohen delivered his first lectures in Glasgow on Sunday. The morning and afternoon meetings were but middling, but there was a good house at night. Mr. Cohen's lectures were highly appreciated and enthusiastically applauded. He has arranged to visit Glasgow again in the spring.

Paisley and Dundee were visited by Mr. Cohen under the President's lecture scheme. At the latter place he delivered three lectures, with which the Branch secretary says "we are all delighted."

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner is arranged to take place at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, January 29—Thomas Paine's birthday. Mr. G. W. Foote will be in the chair, with Mr. Charles Watts and other leading Freethinkers to the left and right. The tickets are, as usual, four shillings; and the function is timed to begin at 7.30, so as to give ample time for terminating at a convenient hour.

The Rev. W. W. Howard definitely agrees to debate with Mr. Foote. He has accepted the conditions he said he would never, never agree to, when negotiations took place at Spennymoor and Liverpool. Yet he now talks of having "brought Mr. Foote to the scratch." However, the reverend gentleman's epistolary eccentricities are not our game at present. He appoints Mr. James Cornes, of Norton House, Leek, to form his wing of the committee. Mr. Foote will see to his side of the business as soon as possible. But he

cannot debate before March, as his time is fully occupied till then.

Mr. Foote will be very busy lecturing in London in January. He will be in the provinces during the whole of February. It is his intention to deliver several week-night lectures during his country tours. Wherever possible a good hall should be engaged, and the admission should be free. Branches or places that would like a visit from Mr. Foote in February should communicate with him as soon as possible.

Public Opinion, of New York, in its issue of November 21, reproduces Mr. Wheeler's article on "Holy Kissing" from our columns almost in its entirety.

Our American readers—and they are many—may do well to patronise *Public Opinion*, of New York, which gives interesting extracts from all the world's literature. *Public Opinion* is very ably edited by Mr. Ernest E. Russell. Its contents are more varied, bright, and impartial than those of its only compeer, the *Literary Digest*, which, like our own *Literary World*, is published by a theological firm, and always reminds the readers of the fact.

In the *Westminster Review* for December Mohammad Barakatullah has an interesting article on Islam and Soofeism. Of the Moslem mystics he says the very essence of their creed is love. "*Tasleem*, or submission, is the first letter in the Soofeic alphabet; *Sulhukkul*, universal peace and goodwill to all, is the second commandment of their religion; *Mahabatulkiul*, to love all, is the final but strict injunction to be carried out."

A study of that fine French writer, Gustave Flaubert, by Ernest Newman, appears in the December *Fortnightly*. Mr. Newman says: "Flaubert held no brief for the Ormuzd of this universe; and if, as the pious Burke once said, 'He censures God who quarrels with the imperfections of men,' Flaubert's sympathies were assuredly not on the side of the angels."

In Herbert Spencer's paper on "Teachers," in continuation of his "Professional Institutions" in the *Contemporary Review*, he argues that the teacher has evolved from, and is gradually supplanting, the priest, although "the differentiation of the teaching class from the priestly class is even now incomplete." The priests, he notices, are still arrogant enough to claim control of what is taught, and State funds without State control.

The new edition of *The Shadow of the Sword*, by G. W. Foote, issued by the Humanitarian League, is noticed in the December number of *Concord*, the organ of the International Arbitration and Peace Society. It is called "an admirable pamphlet, by an old pamphleteer." Its statistics are said to be "valuable," and the peroration is said to be "eloquent" and "worthy of quotation."

The *Star* says the Paine Exhibition marked the progress of the good work of clearing a great man's name from obloquy.

De Dageraad for December opens with a translation of the poetical prose passage on "The Truthseeker," rendered by G. van Beerse from the English of Olive Schreiner. J. G. ten Bokkel writes on the religious descent of Jesus, referring to early Christian notions and the recently-discovered Sinaitic MS., which attributes his fatherhood to Joseph.

Professor Boyesen considers Pagan woman in many respects superior to her Christian sister, and says in the *Forum*: "I cannot but think that the Oriental view of womanhood, implied in the Bible, has had an enormous influence in forcibly checking the normal development. The Catholic Church not only adopted, but immensely exaggerated, the disabilities under which the sex had labored in Semitic lands; and the result was that the free-born, sagacious, and nobly self-dependent daughter of the Teutonic forests was dwarfed, subdued, and spiritually crippled until she became the commonplace, insignificant, obedient *Hausfrau* of to-day."

Mr. Boyesen further remarks: "It will, perhaps, surprise many to learn that the legislation regarding marriage and divorce was, in Iceland and Norway, far more mindful of the wife's interest than it has ever been during the Christian era. The old Icelandic law stipulated, for instance, that if a man were divorced from his wife (even though she were the offending party) he had to return her dowry intact. Divorce was legally obtainable if both parties desired it, and the law did not, as in Christian times, insist upon publicly humiliating and disgracing every man and woman who, in youthful folly, had committed themselves to a choice which made

every breath a blight upon the face of life, and the hours a burden to be dragged through the weary length of day."

The *Popular Science Monthly*, which ever since its foundation by E. L. Youmans has been a foremost advocate of evolution as well as a most interesting *répertoire* of scientific advance, will next year be published simultaneously in London and New York.

Professor Campbell Black's presidential address to the Medico-chirurgical Society, Glasgow, is reported at length in the *North British Daily Mail*. It is most refreshingly outspoken. Here are a few bits: "Subscriptions to infirmaries and the building of churches may be regarded as a social whitewash applied to dirty reputations"—"He was a church elder of the most pronounced Calvinistic sanctity, and wore a three-decker white choker"—"Some saponacious cleric gets up and sententiously and solemnly moves a vote of thanks to the medical officers"—"Some wretched outcast in the tyrant grip of phthisis, forsaken of God and man." It is really astonishing to see these and similar passages printed in a great daily newspaper. What is the world coming to?

Mr. C. Doeg has for many years been a hard worker for the Secular cause in Liverpool. For a considerable time he has been secretary of the N.S.S. Branch. We deeply regret to hear that he is now lying seriously ill, but we hope he will soon recover. Meanwhile all communications about Branch business should be addressed to Mr. Ernest Newman, 1 Saxony-road, Kensington, Liverpool. Mr. Newman is the Branch president.

The Sunderland and Ryhope friends are going to have a social gathering on Christmas Eve, to which they invite all Freethinkers in the district. It will take place in the ball-room of the Guide Post Hotel, Ryhope Colliery, commencing at seven o'clock. There will be songs, recitations, etc., and arrangements will be made for the future propaganda of Freethought.

The Birmingham Branch intends calling a Conference of Midland Branches of Freethinkers early in January. Invitations have been sent out, and on receipt of replies the time and place of meeting will be settled and announced in the *Freethinker*. It is hoped that there will be a response from Freethinkers at Wolverhampton, Walsall, Wednesbury, Dudley, Coventry, Stafford, Cheltenham, etc.

Obituary.

A REMARKABLE woman and gifted writer has passed away in the person of Louisa Sarah Bevington Guggenberger, whose talents won for her the respect and friendship of Herbert Spencer. Miss Bevington was a poetess of no mean order, as was shown in her first volume, *Key Notes*, published in 1879, and succeeded by her *Poems, Lyrics, and Sonnets*, 1882, and her later *Liberty Lyrics*. She showed the high and able quality of her Freethought in her articles on "Modern Atheism and Mr. Mallock" in the *Nineteenth Century* (October and December, 1879), in which she argued that "Conscience has taken millenniums to develop, and it has developed in obedience to a need, and not to a creed, springing out of the fundamental demands of progressive existence rather than from the comparatively recent demands of theological aspiration." Miss Bevington contributed a notable paper on "The Moral Demerits of Orthodoxy" to *Progress*, when edited by Mr. Foote. She was also a contributor to *Modern Thought*, *Mind*, the *Echo*, *Liberty*, etc. She held the ideal of self-government, and did not scruple to call herself an evolutionary Anarchist. Her last book was entitled *Common-Sense Country*.

THE interment of Ivy, the infant daughter of Robert and Sarah Boardman, took place at Failsworth Cemetery on Thursday, December 5, the Secular Burial Service being read by Mr. Henry Clough. The interment was to have taken place in the churchyard, but the clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Barnes, refused to allow the Secular Service to be read, and at the last moment arrangements had to be made at the cemetery. Much sympathy is felt for the parents in their bereavement. They, together with many relations, are firm supporters of the Secular movement in this district.

Christianity is nominally in the nineteenth century of its existence; it maintained slavery in its midst, and instituted slavery in the various countries where it planted the cross, for nearly eighteen centuries; and now it is claimed as a universally admitted fact that Christianity had a large share in bringing about the abolition of slavery.—*Charles Bradlaugh*, "*Notes on Christian Evidences*," p. 42.

WOE IN LONDON.

(After Campbell's "Hohenlinden.")

IN London, when the sun was low,
Nigh "dudless" lay on trodden snow,
A dying waif of winter's woe—
Her eyes were closing wearily.

In Canaan, 'neath a genial sky,
The Lord—unless the Gospels lie—
On loafing idlers cast his eye
In pity for their "peckishness."

In London young and old may cry
To God for food, there's no reply.
They weep and pray, and starve and die—
The Lord's no longer pitiful.

Though Christ neglects starved London brats,
He filled with wine some guzzler's vats,
And gorged a mob with loaves and sprats,
In days of old, in Galilee.

In London starving workers dine
With old "Duke Humphrey"; as for wine,
'Twas made by Christ, in "Auld Lang Syne";
But now he's turned teetotaler.

God's ears can hear the flatt'ring "Hail!"
And pleasing anthem; but they fail
To hear the feeble, piteous wail
Of foodless, helpless little ones.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

PIETY AND IMPOSTURE.

M. COURNOT, Advocate-General at Angers, has been enlightening his brother lawyers on the ways and means of accomplished mendicants. In his speech, or address, at the opening of term, M. Cournot said little that is new, for his information about beggars' "guide books" has long been known in Paris. Metropolitan mendicants have for years had at their disposal books in which the names and addresses of charitable persons are inscribed, together with the sums which an artful cadger may manage to extract from them. The Advocate-General of Angers, however, had something original to state in his illustrations of the manner in which people may be duped by so-called miracles at Lourdes. He cited the case of one Rivière, who was an object of universal sympathy and charity in parts of the departments of the Maine-et-Loire and the Mayenne, where he exhibited himself as a hopeless cripple. He also posed as a deaf mute. He used to journey on crutches or by train from one village or town to another, and was everywhere welcomed, fed on the fat of the land, and supplied with money. His thanks he expressed by signs, and it was found that he was able to divine what people said by the movements of their lips. "How wonderful!" cried his sympathisers, and they prayed, good souls, for his complete recovery. Rivière at last started for Lourdes, his pockets well lined with sterling coin and notes of the Republic. He was plunged into the well of icy water, and immediately recovered his speech, hearing, and the use of his limbs. Then he returned in triumph from the sacred fountain. At every station on his way to Marans, in the Maine-et-Loire department, which he particularly favored, collections were made for him, and when he entered that village the church bells were pealed in his honor. He had collected nearly £80 on his way from Lourdes, and at Marans people were adding to his horde. The Mayor of the place, however, suspected something wrong, and, before organising a general subscription for the cripple so suddenly transformed, thought it prudent to submit Rivière to examination by a skilful medical expert. No sooner did Rivière hear that he was about to be taken before a doctor than he promptly disappeared from Marans. A few weeks afterwards he was discovered at Andouille, in the Mayenne, another of his haunts, deaf, dumb, and paralysed. He was condemned to three years' imprisonment for his series of frauds. M. Cournot also amused his colleagues by the story of the rag-picker, whose children were baptised fourteen times by Catholic priests and twelve times by Protestant pastors, the able and artful parents receiving a substantial bonus on each sprinkling.—*Daily Telegraph* (Dec. 6).

CHINA AND MISSIONARIES.

SUPPOSE that a Chinese missionary society should persist in sending missionaries into the interior of Ireland; that these missionaries should construct a large compound, or enclosure, as the English do in China, and should induce some weak-minded women and children to enter their compound with a view to proving to them that their ancient faith was false and impossible, and should attempt to teach them a new faith, which the Irish believed to be thoroughly immoral, and in reality the religion of the devil? Does any one believe for one moment that the Irish would not turn out, destroy the compound, and murder the Chinese missionaries? and would the Government at London be able to protect these missionaries from being attacked and slain by the Irish people?

It has been suggested by a writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* that the British and the American Governments should force the Chinese to pay £2,000,000 sterling for every foreign missionary murdered. I presume that this writer likes to see fair play, and would not ask anything from China which England and the United States would not in like manner grant to China; so China, of course, would have to be paid £2,000,000 sterling for every Chinaman who is murdered either under the English or the American flag. I think that, at this rate, at the end of the first year the balance in favor of China would enable them not only to pay off their war indemnity, but would also enable them to purchase the largest ironclad fleet in the world. H. S. MAXIM.

PRANKS OF BAPTISM.

A YOUNG woman of twenty, named Françoise Grollet, died on Sunday in the village of Massetterie, in the Department of the Puy-de-Dôme. She was expecting to be confined in a few days, but uremia set in, and, as her relatives supposed, she expired before the doctor could attend from a neighboring village. Her friends sent at the same time for the Curé of the Commune, and he arrived first, carrying the viaticum for the purpose of administering the last rites of the Roman Catholic religion. "The poor woman is dead," they replied to the Abbé. "And the child? Have you thought about that? Perhaps there is still time; it must be baptised." The husband, the father, and the mother were taken aback at the idea of the operation which must be made in order to carry out the ceremony; but when the Abbé said, "Let me do it," they had not sufficient courage to oppose the imperious man of the Church. They left the room, and, in the presence of an old woman of seventy-two, he took a knife, carried out the operation, and baptised the child! The old woman then asked him, "What is to be done with it?" "Put it back again," he replied, and then left the room. On the threshold he met Dr. Girard, to whom he remarked in the most off-hand way, "The woman is dead, but it is all right. I have done all that was necessary."

You may imagine the stupefaction of the doctor when he learned the full significance of the priest's words. Dr. Girard is also Mayor of the Commune, and the first thing he did was to call in the police. In his opinion, the woman was not dead when the operation was performed; she was, he affirms, simply in a state of syncope, which had followed upon one of the attacks of the disease. The police are therefore discussing the question whether to prosecute the Abbé for "homicide by imprudence," or for the "unlawful practice of surgery." The Abbé, on his side, writes a letter to the local paper, the *Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme*, in which he discusses and attempts to justify the act, as if it were the only thing which his creed permitted him to do. "What you describe as a horrible operation," he writes, "was one which my sovereign conscience rendered painfully necessary. The woman had been dead half an hour when I arrived, but her relatives assured me that the child was still living, and it was incumbent upon me to make sure that it should go to heaven by baptism, and perhaps give it life on earth by the aid which science could afford. As regards the 'repugnant operation,' the relatives present approved of it, though they refused to carry it out themselves. My rôle in this affair was not marked so much by temerity as by my devotion to my religion." A full inquiry is to be made, and it should put an end to this barbarous Cesarean custom.

—*Sunday Chronicle*.

We have lost many good things of Cervantes, and other writers, because of the tribunal of religion and dulness. One Aonius Palearius was sensible of this, and said that "the Inquisition was a poniard aimed at the throat of literature." The image is striking, and the observation just; but the ingenious observer was in consequence immediately led to the stake.—*I. D'Israeli*.

JESUS AND HIS FATHER.

ALTHOUGH M. Clermont Ganneau has speculated that Jehovah was not originally a bachelor, but had a consort, afterwards known as Kadosh, just as Baal had Ashtoreth, it is certain that by the time Ezra, or the great Synagogue, or someone else compiled the Jewish writings, the God of the Jews, while retaining his masculine character, was altogether too old, stern, and far-off for anything in the line of amorous adventures. Nor did he make up for his lack of the companionship of goddesses by indulging in those intrigues with the daughters of men for which the deities of Greece and Rome were famous. Jews and Mohammedans alike repudiate such a notion. "Sole Maker of the Heavens and of the Earth! How, when He hath no consort, should he have a son?" asks Mohammed (Koran vi. 100). True, in the old days, "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took wives of all which they chose" (Gen. vi. 3). But the Ancient of Days, though he commanded his prophet Hosea to break the Seventh Commandment (Hosea i. 2, iii. 1), can never be suspected of having done the like himself. He was not that kind of a deity at all. Ruling a refractory race like the Jews indisposes for sports like those of Krishna with the Gopis.

One cannot help fancying that we should never have heard of this carpenter's wife's Son of God, born without a human father, had not the Pagan world been accustomed to ascribe divine birth to their heroes. The god Apollo was assigned as the father of Plato. Buddha was born from the left side of the immaculate Maya. Alexander the Great gave out that he was begotten by Zeus. Divine parentage was ascribed to Augustus Caesar, and to the Pagan Christ, Apollonius of Tyana. All the old culture-heroes were born of gods, and usually from virgin mothers. When Christianity spread among the heathen, its hero must have as high an origin as any of them. Justin Martyr, in his *First Apology* (chap. xxii.), expressly puts him in the same category. He says: "And if we assert that the Word of God was born of God in a peculiar manner different from ordinary generation, let this be no extraordinary thing to you, who say that Mercury is the angelic Word of God..... And if we even affirm that He was born of a virgin, accept this in common with what you accept of Perseus." Mr. Hartland, in his erudite *Legend of Perseus*, shows that stories of supernatural birth are literally world-wide.

It is curious that of the four gospels only two mention the virgin birth, which is never alluded to by Paul or the other epistle writers. And these two hopelessly contradict each other. In Matthew, Mary appears unaware of the honor (or shame) brought upon her. In Luke it is announced by Gabriel. Matthew tells us that Joseph, but for his dreams, would have put her away. How Matthew got to know what Joseph dreamt we are left to conjecture. From Luke it does not appear that Joseph knew anything of the condition of his betrothed. Although Mary had sung, "Henceforth all nations shall call me blessed"; though angels announced the wonderful birth to shepherds; though the miraculously-born child had been visited by wise men from the east, and had been declared by Zachariah, "the prophet of the most high," purifications were offered for him as for an ordinary sin-born infant; he had to submit to the rite of circumcision; and when at twelve years of age he stayed in the temple, "his parents" were astonished, and his mother said: "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing" (Luke ii. 41-48). Matthew relates that in his own country they asked: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Josas and Simon and Judas?" (xiii. 55). The reply of Jesus, that a prophet is not without honor but among his own kin, shows that he shared the general belief. John tells us "neither did his brethren believe in him" (vii. 5). Perhaps they went to eternal torment for their unbelief; but certainly they were in a position to know the facts of the case somewhat better than the believers of to-day. Be it noted, too, that the Hebrew Christians, the people who, if any, were in the best position to be acquainted with the facts, did not believe in the virgin birth. Moreover, the Syriac Gospel of Matthew, discovered by Mrs. Lewis, makes the distinct statement that Joseph begat Jesus. It was the Gentile Christians, those already used to the fables of men born of gods, who credited and circulated a story which is not only an outrage upon human credulity, but is refuted by the evidence of the very documents upon which alone it is built.

It may be too much positively to affirm that Jesus of Nazareth was the son of Joseph, as Philip told Nathaniel (John i. 45), and as the Syriac Gospel affirms. If it is a wise child that knows its own father, it is sometimes venturesome for anyone else—save the mother—to make any affirmations as to fatherhood. Some suspicion may rest on Zechariah, the high priest; on Gabriel, the messenger; or on the scamp Pandra, to whom the Jews assigned the paternity. But, in view of her marriage and large family, it is charitable to Mary to assume that Philip and the Syriac Gospel were right.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

BOOK CHAT.

THERE is a combative air about *Spiritual Truth and Common Sense*, a plea for Spiritualism, by Brian Hodgson. The author offers to meet, "at any time and at any place he chooses to name," any individual, "be he scientist or theologian, who has the courage to stand up to one of his own size." We are unacquainted with Mr. Hodgson's size, but he talks large. He appeals for spirit return first to "universal experience," and he quotes Dr. Draper as saying "there is a body of evidence reaching from the remotest age to the present time." Yet Dr. Draper plainly implied that the evidence for ghosts, enormous in quantity, is deficient in quality; and if there be but one person without evidence of ghosts or gods, it is incorrect to appeal to "universal experience." The question is, What is the testimony to alleged supernatural facts worth? Mr. Hodgson himself would probably reject the stories of witchcraft, told by Central Africans, on the ground that they must interpret facts in accordance with their own limited ideas and education. The devils are as true to them as the spirits to Mr. Hodgson. Of course we are told the old story about Mr. Crookes and Florence Cook; but in our reading of it an able scientist was grossly humbugged by a clever woman, as in the case of Eusapia Paladino and Mr. Oliver Lodge. There is nothing unusual in a tricky woman being able to deceive a grave professor. But Mr. Hodgson gives us some of his own experiences. He tells us: "During seven sittings my body was systematically subjected to an operation impossible to describe in materialistic terminology." The final object, if we understand Mr. Hodgson aright, was to induce in him a spirit of humility, and he shows it by saying: "Thus I learned how it was that the investigation of Spiritualism has no attraction for the scientist." The person who does not believe himself the medium of supernatural communications seems to be, to Mr. Hodgson, the natural type of arrogance.

* * *

A record of all the old English customs which still exist is about to be published. It has been collected by the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, rector of Barkham, Berks.

* * *

Messrs. Methuen and Co. announce a new work by F. S. Granger, M.A., on *The Worship of the Romans*. It deals with such topics as Dreams, Nature-Worship, Magic, Divination, Holy Places, Victims, etc.

* * *

In the catalogue of the Paine Exhibition (No. 10) is mention of a motto inscribed in gold letters. The lines, which are said to be probably by Rickman, are:—

He who dare not reason is a slave;
He who cannot reason is a fool;
He who will not reason is a bigot.

The passage, we believe, is really taken from the *Academical Questions* of Sir William Drummond, a work which influenced Shelley, and is quoted by him in his notes to *Queen Mab*. As the work is now rare, the whole passage is worth quoting: "The free and philosophic spirit of our nation has been the theme of admiration to the world. This was the proud distinction of Englishmen, and the luminous source of all their glory. Shall we, then, forget the manly and dignified sentiments of our ancestors to prate in the language of the mother or the nurse about our good old prejudices? This is not the way to defend the cause of truth. It was not thus that our fathers maintained it in the brilliant periods of our history. Prejudice may be trusted to guard the outworks for a short space of time, while reason slumbers in the citadel; but, if the latter sink into a lethargy, the former will quickly erect a standard for herself. Philosophy, wisdom, and liberty support each other: he who will no reason is a bigot; he who cannot is a fool; and he who dares not is a slave."

* * *

The orthodox cannot be expected to relish *The Woman's Bible*, and "Nym Crinkle" expresses their view in the *New York World* of Sunday, November 24. He reminds women that all the knowledge concerning the Hebrew Scriptures which is accessible to the race has been garnered for two thousand years by men. This, it may be said, is all the more reason that woman should have her turn. At any rate under the guidance of Mrs. Stanton, she is taking it; and one of her first steps is to unsex Jehovah, and turn him into an hermaphrodite deity. Now, "Nym Crinkle" objects to this, "because in carrying sexual consideration over into primordial fields she unwittingly postulates a goddess who is subject to the vagaries, the invalidism, and the physical and mental perturbations which are indissolubly united to the finite woman." But is not making God the Father, and masculine, also "carrying sexual consideration over into primordial fields"? and what better is a jealous and tyrannical god than a whimsical goddess? If the *New Woman* means to run a new deity, the sneers of "Nym Crinkle" will not hinder.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SAVE THE CHILDREN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have just withdrawn my daughter from religious instruction in a Board school, and have induced neighbors to withdraw three other children in the same school. I earnestly beg Freethinkers in every part of London (and elsewhere) to take the same step. I will gladly advise any parent who feels anxious on the subject, and I will send copies of my leaflet, "Our Children," gratis to any address. This leaflet states reasons for withdrawing children from Bible lessons, and points out the importance of plain, moral instruction apart from theology. This religious difficulty will never approach a settlement until parents, in considerable numbers, take their children out of the Bible classes. The clergy of the churches, wise, exceedingly wise, in their generation, make strenuous efforts to seize the minds of the young. They can laugh at the efforts of Rationalists. As fast as we convert one adult they train up ten children in the old, false way. Let me beg all parents, who value their children's welfare, to consider this most serious question. Save the children; and, in order to ease the children's burden, let parents act together, so that the scholars may be withdrawn, not in units, but in twos, and threes, and fours.

F. J. GOULD.

12 Meynell-road, Hackney Common, N.E.

THE HEBREW BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The puerilities of the Jewish faith concerning the Jewish fetish is a subject not exhausted by Chilperic's interesting article on "Curiosities of the Hebrew Bible." His writings are always instructive, and his *Witness of Assyria* is a decided acquisition to a Freethinker's library. I am, however, not quite sure if the suspended *ain* in Psalm lxxx. 14 is, as he says, "a genuine correction." Orthodox Jews say this letter is suspended because the initial of the accursed "tree." It is supposed to refer to the cross; and the wild boar, which ravages the vine of Israel, is the same person the Chinese call "the pig Jesus." Yet the Christian editors, Michaelis, Van der Hooght, Frey, Leusden, and Jahn, have gone on reprinting the suspended *ain*, just as the Jewish scribes had to adhere to all the mistakes of their copies, unaware that they were thereby perpetuating an insult on their blessed Savior. The Jews also suspended the *ain* in Jeshu, that it shall not imply he brings salvation. The explanation of these suspended letters being certainly post-Christian, it is probable that the suspension is also; just as the Jews never thought of turning Moses into Manasseh in Judges xviii. 30 until they were far removed from idolatry, and wished to cover the fact that the descendants of Moses were idolaters.

Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (c. 73), accuses the Jews of cutting out from Psalm xcvi. 10 the words, "from the wood." He says the passage ought to read: "Tell ye among the nations the Lord hath reigned from the wood." But this was a false accusation of the Christian father, and one that falls back on his own party; for, as the note by Otto to the Clarke Ante-Nicene Christian Library says, "These words were not taken away by the Jews, but added by some Christian."

What different meanings may be attached to Hebrew words will appear from the following illustration:—Psalm lxxxix. 49, which in the Authorised Version reads, "Lord, where are thy former loving kindnesses which thou swearest unto David in thy truth?" may be fairly translated to read: "O, my Adonis, where are thy endearments of old which thou sworest for the sake of love, by thy phallus (or Tau), O Amen?" If the Bible throughout was translated in this style, we should be led back to quite a different religion from that taught in the Board schools.

MORE NEBOCHIM.

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

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE monthly Executive meeting was held on Thursday, November 29, the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. C. Watts, E. Bater, J. Potter, J. Zwiebel, F. Wood, S. Jones, E. Quay, H. J. Stace, A. F. Yayer, and Miss Vance (sec.).

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed, and cash statement received.

A letter was ordered to be filed from James Anderson, notifying that he would appeal to the next Conference against the removal of his name from the Society's books. A letter from his Branch (Finsbury) was ordered to be returned, with an intimation that it was unconstitutional, as the power to remove members was vested solely in the Executive.

An application from Paisley asking for permission to reform the Branch, in consequence of the interest aroused by Mr. Watts's lecture under the new lecture scheme, was considered, and permission granted.

The President reported the formation of three fresh Branches in Yorkshire by Mr. Cohen in the same manner; also that he (the President) was arranging for week-night lectures in the West-end of London.

It was resolved to hold the annual Children's Party in January. Several names were proposed to form a committee, and the Secretary was instructed to obtain consent. The full list will be duly announced.

It was also resolved that the Annual Dinner, at the Holborn Restaurant, should be held in January.

The President reported that financial assistance had been rendered to the Battersea Branch from the Lecture Fund.

Mr. Watts moved (seconded by Mr. Stace): "That Mr. R. O. Smith be requested to send some answer to the resolution passed by the Executive at its last meeting"; and, on it being carried, the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE, *Assistant Secretary*.

Children's Party.

THE Committee are making arrangements for the annual treat for our little ones, the time fixed being early in February. Miss Vance is secretary, and Mr. R. Forder is the treasurer. Those who have supported us in the past are reminded that funds are needed, and the sums subscribed will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

R. FORDER, *Treasurer*.

28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Those Kids!

A pretty little maid had red hair, and often heard it disparaged by neighbors and servants. Said her grandmother to her: "Child, your hair was made by the dear God, and whatever he has made is well done." "Still, I would rather have nothing else made by him," replied the little one.

Dolly (to her brother Tommy)—"Do you know, Tommy, that you come from heaven?" Tommy—"Did I?" Dolly—"Yes." Tommy—"Well, I must have come down a devil of a whop."

A little girl, four and half years old, lately said; "Papa, who made Mary and Joseph?" "Why, God, of course." "Oh, no, papa, that could not be; for, if Jesus is God, and Mary is Jesus's mother, how could God make his own mother?"

"Mamma, I don't want to be an angel when I die, and I needn't, need I?" "Why, Susie?" questioned mamma. "'Cos I don't want to leave off all my clothes, and wear feeders like a hen!"

Jesus knew all things, created all things, we are told. And yet we do not find that he understood one art or one science. His science was just that of any street arab. He was profoundly ignorant of history, of science, and philosophy, as well as of literature. All the greatest works of ancient times were written before his day—the literature of Greece was past its prime before he lived, and that of Rome had reached its highest excellence in his supposed lifetime. He knew nothing of either.—*J. Symes*.

If you wish depth, genius, imagination, taste, reason, sensibility, philosophy, elevation, originality, nature, intellect, fancy, rectitude, facility, flexibility, precision, art, abundance, variety, fertility, warmth, magic, charm, grace, force, an eagle sweep of vision, vast understanding, instruction rich, tone excellent, urbanity, suavity, delicacy, correctness, purity, clearness, eloquence, harmony, brilliancy, rapidity, gaiety, pathos, sublimity, and universality—perfection, indeed—behold Voltaire.—*Goethe*.

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 Clerical Conspiracy Against Education."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, Dr. E. B. Aveling, "Karl Marx and Charles Darwin." Tuesday, at 8, social party. Wednesday, at 8, public discussion—George Standing, "Socialism and Secularism."
BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, a lecture. Tuesday and Friday, at 8, social gatherings.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. Kent, "Are the Unemployed to go to the Devil?"
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Roman-road): 3, Sunday-school; 7.30, M. S. Nathan, "London Government."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, F. J. Gould, "The Life of Bradlaugh."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Graham Wallas, "Public Opinion and Public Action."
WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, J. Cooke, "Is Suicide Justifiable?"
WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stuart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Sin Against God an Impossibility."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, a lecture.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, S. Armfield, "The Birth of the Christian God."
BLACKBURN (Spinners' Institute, St. Peter-street): 11, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 3, "The Dream of Immortality"; 6.30, "Scepticism: its Meaning and Value."
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Voltaire."
DARWEN (Assembly Rooms, over News office): Monday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Is Christianity True?"
DUNDEE (Tally-street Hall): 6.30, discussion, "God is Love—Is it True?"
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—G. Faulkner, "Some Notes on King Solomon"; 6.30, Mr. McGivern, "The Basis of Materialism."
HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Grainger, "Random Bible Readings."
LPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, members' meeting—all attend.
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Children of Freethinkers"; 6.30, "The Workings of Conscience in Shakespeare's Plays."
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Rhodes, "Christian Evidences and Freethought."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Water: its Uses and Properties."
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, G. W. Foote, "Gladstone's Theology"; 8, "Huxley's Agnosticism"; 7, "Life, Death, and After."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Robert Lane, F.G.S., "Denudation: its Cause, and its Effects upon the Earth"; 7, "Some of the Terrible Monsters of the Ancient World: their Probable Use, and Cause of Extinction"—with lantern illustrations. Tea at 5.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting.
STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Mr. Yates, "Genesis and Geology."
TODMORDEN (Sobriety Hall): Saturday, Dec. 14, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "What Think ye of Christ?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—December 15, Blackburn; 22, Wood Green; 29, Balls Pond.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Dec. 22, Leicester.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—December 15, Wood Green; 29, Foresters' Hall.

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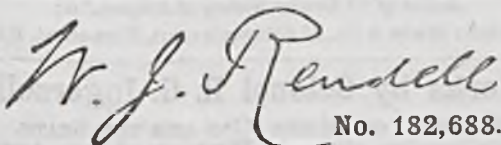
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