

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## INGERSOLL "LIES."

THE present article will not deal with lies told *by* Ingersoll, but with lies told *about* him. To write about the former would be like making bricks without clay. To write about the latter is to face the opposite difficulty; one is overwhelmed by the abundance of material, and hardly knows where to begin and when to leave off.

But before I go farther I may as well say something about the word "lie." Two years ago I was taken to task for applying this word to a conversion story written by an eminent Wesleyan minister. This gentleman had steadily refused all investigation of his narrative, although the hero of it—at any rate as depicted—never had any real existence. He stuck to his story through thick and thin, and finally made a desperate effort to shelter himself behind the person of a friendly Freethinker. Happily, by a quite "miraculous" stroke of good luck, I was enabled to expose the whole plot. I found the family of the Atheist Shoemaker; I traced out with them the house in which he had lodged, and interviewed the landlady; I also traced out with them the place where he had worked, and interviewed his shopmates. The result was an absolute disproof of all the leading features of the Atheist Shoemaker story. Everything that gave it interest and importance was utterly false. But the reverend author of this pious concoction still boasts himself a perfectly honorable man. The attitude he takes is that he couldn't lie if he tried. This is the attitude taken by nine out of every ten prisoners tried at the Old Bailey, but as their attitude does not bar a fair trial they are often found guilty and punished accordingly.

I called, and I still call, that reverend gentleman's story *a lie*. In doing so I know I offend a handful of finical persons, who think more of etiquette than of honesty in this matter. They say I should have called the story *inaccurate*. But that word does not express my meaning. I mean that the author deliberately palmed off fiction as fact; I mean that he took every precaution against investigation; I mean that he refused to modify his story even when persons who were in a position to know pointed out that some parts of it were clearly untrue; I mean that he kept all the evidence against it from the eyes of his own readers; I mean that, although he no longer has the courage to sell the book, he continues to tell the public, when he is questioned, that its contents are as true as gospel. What is the use of asking me to call this story *inaccurate*? I am not built that way, and am glad I am not. I call it *a lie*. And if there were any stronger word in the English vocabulary I would use it. As it is, I use the noun, and let every reader preface it with a well-selected adjective.

Let me say once for all that, in my opinion, wickedness is worse than plain language; that it is worse to *tell* lies than to *call* them lies. When one man cuts another's throat, I call it murder; those who like can call it unjustifiable homicide; but don't let them try to hang me instead of the other fellow.

Colonel Ingersoll does not scruple to use the word "lie" when he thinks it necessary. The following passage from his pen will serve as an excellent finish to my introduction:—

"Countless falsehoods have been circulated about all the opponents of superstition. Whoever attacks the popular falsehoods of his time will find that a lie defends itself by telling other lies. Nothing is so prolific, nothing can so multiply itself nothing can lay and hatch so

many eggs, as a good, healthy, religious lie.....There are thousands and thousands of tongues ready to repeat what the owners know to be false, and these lies are a part of the stock-in-trade, the valuable assets, of superstition."

Ingersoll himself has been the subject of hundreds of lies. The clergy of the United States slander him recklessly. They cannot answer him, and they know it; and they know that he knows it; so they resort to the cheap and easy method of defamation, relying upon what Ingersoll calls "the wonderful credulity of the believers in the supernatural," who "feel under an obligation to believe everything in favor of their religion, or against any form of what they are pleased to call infidelity."

The happy idea occurred to Mr. E. M. Macdonald, editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, to wheel a big counter out into the street and nail a lot of these lies down in sight of the American public. *Colonel Robert Ingersoll As He Is* forms a handsome little volume of 160 pages. Its sub-title declares it to be "A Complete Refutation of His Clerical Enemies' Malicious Slanders." The cover bears a capital portrait of the great Freethought orator, and the price is only twenty-five cents—about one shilling of English money.

One great merit of Mr. Macdonald's work, and one that much enhances its value, is that he gives chapter and verse for everything. Name, place, and date are printed on every occasion. If a newspaper is quoted, the exact issue is mentioned, so that the doubting Thomases of orthodoxy may hunt up the reference for themselves.

This book ought to be widely circulated in England, and it ought to be put into the hands of Christians. Some of the blackguards who shuffle along in the gutter of Christian Evidences are very active in circulating here a libellous account of Colonel Ingersoll's career. The proper answer to such stuff is a horsewhip, but as it is an expensive luxury to thrash a Christian in a Christian country, this counsel of perfection is too dear to follow. The next best thing is to send a refutation after the lie. It will not catch the lie everywhere, but it will in some places, and the truth will get a chance now and then.

The libellous account circulated in England, and partially cited by that amiable Yankee revivalist, the Rev. H. L. Hastings, appears to have emanated from a South Dakota minister, the Rev. J. D. Houston. This creature got a big congregation one Sunday night on the pretence that he was going to reply to Ingersoll, but instead of answering the Colonel's arguments he spent an hour in slandering his character. It is a wonder that some Christian did not kick the fellow when he got down from the pulpit. Not satisfied with calling Ingersoll a drunkard, he declared that the Colonel actually made his own daughters drunk at the dinner-table, so that they had to be assisted out of the room. Any Secular lecturer who talked in that way about a Christian advocate would be pulled off the platform, but there appears to be no limit to what Christians will stand in this direction.

Ingersoll is not a teetotaler, neither is Mr. Gladstone, neither is the Pope, neither was Jesus Christ. He does not believe in Prohibition, neither does the Archbishop of Canterbury. "The trouble with Prohibition," he says, "is that it fills the country with spies—makes neighbors suspicious of each other—fills the community with meddlers—with people who poke their impudent noses into the business of others. Besides, Prohibition does not prohibit—it does not even prohibit the Prohibitionists." Nor is

Ingersoll an anti-tobacconist. He enjoys a good cigar, like the late Mr. Spurgeon, who declined to drop his havannah, and declared he would smoke it to the glory of God.

Drinking a glass of wine, however, is not drunkenness. Ingersoll's friends all know him to be a lover of temperance. How otherwise could he have worked so hard? His law practice is very extensive, and although he is turned sixty he goes on a lecturing tour for weeks together, travelling every day and lecturing every night. Could a man do that on intemperance? It is really too ridiculous for discussion. Besides, those who assert that a man is intemperate must prove it. It is infamous to let the bigotry of the jury serve in the place of evidence.

Ingersoll has been accused of eulogising good whisky, and this by Christians who go to church and drink the Blood of Christ in bad port wine. In April, 1887, his young friend Brown—now his son-in-law—was laid up with pneumonia, and the doctors prescribed whisky in small doses. A friend of Ingersoll's had presented him with a jug of very old whisky, and a bottle of it was sent to Mr. Brown, with the following letter, which got into the newspapers:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I send you some of the most wonderful whisky that ever drove the skeleton from a feast or painted landscapes in the brain of man. It is the mingled souls of wheat and corn. In it you will find the sunshine and the shadow that chased each other over the billowy fields; the breath of June; the carol of the lark; the dews of night; the wealth of summer and autumn's rich content, all golden with imprisoned light. Drink it and you will hear the voices of men and maidens singing the 'Harvest Home,' mingled with the laughter of children. Drink it and you will feel within your blood the star-lit dawns, the dreamy, tawny dusks of many perfect days. For forty years this liquid joy has been within the happy staves of oak, longing to touch the lips of men.

"R. G. INGERSOLL."

This letter is the composition of a poet, and poets do not always speak on affidavit. Besides, it was a letter to a sick man, and meant to be as medicinal as the whisky.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

## ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

### CHAPTER I.

#### OPEN THOUGHT THE FIRST STEP TO INTELLIGENCE.

"It is not prudent to be in the right too soon, nor to be in the right against everybody else. And yet it sometimes happens that, after a certain lapse of time, greater or lesser, you will find that one of those truths which you had kept to yourself, as premature, but which has got abroad, in spite of your teeth, has become the most commonplace thing imaginable."—ALPHONSE KARR.

ONE purpose of this series of articles will be to explain how unfounded are the objections of many excellent Christians to secular instruction in Board schools. The secular is distinct from theology, which it neither ignores, assails, nor denies. Things secular are as separate from the Church as land from the ocean. And what nobody seems to discern is that things secular are in themselves quite distinct from Secularism. The secular is a mode of instruction; Secularism is a code of conduct. Secularism does conflict with theology; Secularist teaching would, but secular instruction would not.

Persuaded as I am that lack of consideration for the convictions of the reader creates an impediment in the way of his agreement with the writer, and even disinclines him to examine what is put before him; yet it is nevertheless possible that some of these pages may be open to this objection. If so, it is owing to want of thought, or want of art in statement; and it is no part of the intention of the writer.

He would have diffidence in expressing, as he does in these pages, his dissent from the opinions of many Christian advocates—for whose character and convictions he has great respect, and for some even affection—did he not perceive that few have any diffidence or reservation (save in one or two exalted instances\*) in maintaining their views and dissenting from his.

\* Of whom the greatest is Mr. Gladstone.

Open thought, which in this chapter is brought under the reader's notice, is sometimes called "self thought," or "free thought," or "original thought"—the opposite of conventional, second-hand thought, which is all that the custom-ridden mass of mankind are addicted to.

Open thought has three stages.

The first stage is that in which the right to think independently is insisted on, and the free action of opinion so formed is maintained. Conscious power thus acquired satisfies the pride of some; others limit its exercise from prudence. Interests which would be jeopardised by applying independent thought to received opinion keep more persons silent, and thus many never pass from this stage.

The second stage is that in which the right of self-thought is applied to the criticism of theology, with a view to clear the way for life according to reason. This is not the work of a day or year, but is so prolonged that clearing the way becomes, as it were, a profession, and is at length pursued as an end, instead of a means. Disputation becomes a passion, and the higher state of life, of which criticism is the necessary precursor, is lost sight of, and many remain at this stage, when it is reached, and go no farther.

The third stage is that where ethical motives of conduct, apart from Christianity, are vindicated for the guidance of those who are indifferent about theology, or who reject it altogether. Supplying to such persons secular reasons for duty is Secularism, the range of which is illimitable. It begins where Freethought usually ends, and constitutes a new form of constructive thought, the principles and policy of which are quite different from those acted upon in the preceding stages. Controversy concerns itself with what *is*; Secularism with what *ought* to be.

It is pertinent here to say that Christianity does not permit eclecticism—that is, it does not tolerate others selecting portions of Christian Scriptures possessing the mark of intrinsic truth, to which many could cheerfully conform in their lives. This rule compels all who cannot accept the entire Scriptures to deal with its teachings as they find them expressed, and for which Christianity makes itself responsible. All the while it is quite evident that Christians do permit eclecticism among themselves. The great Congress of the Free Churches, recently held in Nottingham, representing the personal and vital form of Christianity, had a humanness and tolerance unmanifested by Christianity before, showing that humanity is stronger than historical integrity. If anyone, therefore, should draw up, as might be done, a theory of Christianity solely from such doctrines as are represented in the elliptical preaching, practice, and social life of Christians of to-day, a very different estimate of the Christian system would have to be given from that with which the author deals in the subsequent chapters. In them Christianity is represented as Freethought has found it, and as it exists in the Scriptures, in the law, in the pulpit, and the school, which constitute its total force in the respects in which it represses and discourages independent thought. Science, truth, and criticism have engrafted themselves on historic Christianity. It has now new articles of belief. When it avows them it will win larger concurrence and respect than it can now command.

### CHAPTER II.

#### THE QUESTION STATED.

"Look forward—not backward;  
Look up—not down;  
Look around;  
Lend a hand."\*

—EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.

Where a monarchy is master, inquiry is apt to be a disturbing element; and, though it be exercised in the interest of the commonwealth, it is none the less resented. Where the priest is master inquiry is sharply prohibited. The priest represents a spiritual monarchy in which the tenets of belief are fixed—assumed to be infallible, and to be prescribed by Deity. Thus the priest regards inquiry as proceeding from an impertinent distrust, to which he is not reconciled on being assured that it is undertaken in the interest of truth. Thus the king denounces inquiry as sedition, and the priest as sin. In the end the inquirer

\* Dr. Hale did not popularise these energetic maxims of earnestness in the connection in which they are here used; but their wisdom is of general application.

finds himself an alien in Church and State, and laws are made against his life, his liberty, property, and veracity.\*

Thus, from the time when monarch and priest first set up their pretensions in the world, the inquiring mind has had small encouragement. When Protestantism came it merely conceded inquiry *under direction*, and only so far as it tended to confirm its own anti-papal tenets. But when inquiry claimed to be independent, unfettered, uncontrolled—in fact, to be *free inquiry*—then Papist, Lutheran, and Dissenter alike regarded it as dangerous, and stigmatised it by every term calculated to deter or dissuade people from it.

But, though this combined defamation of inquiry set many against it, it did not intimidate men entirely. There arose independent thinkers, who held that unfettered investigation was the discoverer of truth and dangerous to error only, and that the freer it was the more effective it must be. Still, timorous-minded persons remained suspicious of *free thought*. At its best, they found it involved conflict with false opinion, and conflict, to those without aspiration or conscience, is disquieting; and where impartial investigation interfered with personal interests it was opposed. No one could enter on the search for truth without finding his path obstructed by theological errors and interdictions. Having taken the side of truth, all who were loyal to it were bound, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, to withstand the Apollyons who opposed it, and a combat began which lasted for centuries and is not yet ended. But, though theology was always in power, men of courage at length established also a free platform and a free press for the publication of the results arrived at. These rights were so indispensable for progress, and were so long resisted, that generations fought for them as ends in themselves. Thus there grew up, as in military affairs, a class whose profession was destruction, and Freethinkers came to be regarded as Negationists. When I came into the field the combat was raging. Richard Carlile had not long been liberated from successive imprisonments of more than nine years' duration. Charles Southwell was in the Bristol Gaol. Before his sentence had half expired I was in Gloucester Gaol. George Adams was there; Mrs. Harriet Adams was committed for trial from Cheltenham. Matilda Roalfe, Thomas Finlay, Thomas Paterson, and others, were incarcerated in Scotland. Robert Buchanan and Lloyd Jones, two social missionaries—colleagues of my own—escaped disabling consequences only by swearing they believed what they did not believe—an act I refused to imitate; and no mean inconvenience resulted to me from it. I took part in the vindication of the free publicity of opinion till it was practically conceded.

At the time when I was arrested in 1842 the Cheltenham magistrates, who were angered at defiant remarks I made, had the power (and used it) of committing me to the Quarter Sessions as a "felon," where the same justices could resent, by penalties, what I had said to them. On representations I made to Parliament, through my friend, John Arthur Roebuck, and others, Sir James Graham caused a Bill to be passed which removed trials for opinion to the Assizes. I was the first person tried under this Act. Thus, for the first time, heresy was ensured a dispassionate trial, and was no longer subject to the jurisdiction of local prejudice and magisterial resentment.

When overt acts of outrage were no longer possible against the adherents of Freethought, some from fairness, and others from necessity, began to reason with them, and asked: "Now you have established your claim to be heard, what have you to say?" The reply I proposed was: "Secularism—a form of opinion relating to the duty of this life, which substituted the piety of useful men for the usefulness of piety." GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

Yes, here in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal. Work it out therefrom, and, working, believe, live, be free.—Carlyle, "Sartor Resartus."

\* When martyrdoms and imprisonments ceased, disabling laws remained, which impose the Christian oath on all who appealed to the Courts; and those who had the pride of veracity and declined to swear were denied protection for property or credence of their word.

## FOLK-LORE RESULTS.

THE Folk-Lore Society is to be congratulated upon its President. In Mr. Edward Clodd it has a gentleman of wide attainments, animated by the true scientific spirit, and ready to utter forthright the conclusions to which his inquiries have led him. I cordially compliment the Society upon its President; but I am not quite so sure if the President is to be as warmly congratulated upon his Society, though it contains many eminent workers in the field of folk-lore.

Some of them, at least, are understood to have objected to the Presidential address being printed in *Folk-Lore*, the Society's journal, on the ground of its supposed irreligious tendency. It does appear, however, in the current number, with the editorial explanation that, "in accordance with the general rule in all scientific societies," the address "is not open to criticism or alteration by the Council or by the Editor. It is the expression of the views of the President, and is listened to by the members with the respect due to his position. It does not necessarily express the opinions of the Council, or of the members at large."

What was there in Mr. Clodd's address to give rise to this very guarded editorial utterance? Just this, and nothing more: he told the folk-loreists plainly that they had not faced the larger significance of folk-lore, and its bearing on the creeds around us. "Comparative anatomy," he said, "has not more completely demonstrated the common descent of man and ape, and the consequent classification of man in the order Primate, than comparative anthropology has demonstrated his advance from the animal stage to civilisation. That work can never be undone. And one momentous effect of it is the disproof of traditional theories about man's paradisaical state and his fall therefrom." The evidence of man's early state is to be seen in the superstitious beliefs still surviving around us. This aspect your dilettante folk-loreist is inclined to shirk. Mr. Clodd says: "We have only cast a sheep's eye at it. Our treatment has been allusive, never quite direct. We meet and discuss groups of interesting facts—facts whose humour tickles us, or whose pathos moves us. And, as Omar Khayyám says, we have 'talked about it and about.' There has been some hesitation to approach the ultimate conclusions to which the facts point; partly from the wholesome influence of the scientific spirit, which bids us make sure that the fact will bear the weight of the inference; partly, too, from the tremendous power of the *taboo*, which would limit the scope of inquiry by artificial threats to trespassers." For my part, I fear the *taboo* is vastly more operative than the caution induced by the scientific spirit. Mr. Clodd continues:—

"To bring home my meaning, let us look at the general attitude towards a couple of books whose subjects are of momentous import, and which may be bracketed together as complementary to each other. I refer to Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Mr. Hartland's *Legend of Perseus*. I was specially careful to follow the numerous reviews of Mr. Frazer's book, and in none that came under my eye was the far-reaching significance of the materials hinted at. The connection of the Arician custom of killing the priest-god with groups of allied customs was discussed; there was much discursive talk about tree-spirits, separable souls, and taboos, about survivals of tree-worship in 'stinking ydols,' as old Stubbs calls the May-poles in his *Anatomie of Abuses*—in fine, a great deal of dancing round them by the critics. Now the full title of Mr. Frazer's book is, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion*. In the preface he says that its 'central idea is the conception of the slain god.' In the last sentence he reminds us that 'the king of the wood no longer stands sentinel over the Golden Bough. But Nemi's woods are still green, and at evening you may hear the church bells of Albano, and, perhaps, if the air be still, of Rome itself, ringing the Angelus. *Le roi est mort; vive le roi!*'"

Probably the notices of Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* in the *Freethinker* have not come under Mr. Clodd's eye. If they had, they would be exempt from his strictures. In an article on "Dead and Resurrected Gods," which I contributed to the *Freethinker* of November 2, 1890, I said, noticing Mr. Frazer's epoch-making volume: "The inference which a Freethinking reader is likely to draw from Mr. Frazer's erudite work is that, like other gods who died and rose from the dead, Christ is but a survival, embodying more primitive ideas and worships, which explain, as no

Christian is able to explain, how it is that a god should be put to death." Again and again I have called attention to Mr. Frazer's work just on account of its explanation of the beliefs around us, and this is the central purpose of my own *Footsteps of the Past*, of which one clergyman has made the very opposite complaint to that of Mr. Clodd—namely, that I speak out quite direct when I might have contented myself with being merely "allusive"—which often enough means being illusive also.

After showing that Mr. Frazer's work explains both the killing of the God and the taking of the sacrament, Mr. Clodd turns to Mr. Hartland's *Legend of Perseus*, and points out that it, too, illustrates the myths at the root of Christianity. "He has collected a large number of variants of legends of miraculous conceptions and virgin births, the existence of which demands, for purposes of inquiry and comparison, the inclusion of every story of corresponding character." Mr. Clodd goes further, and shows that the grossest conceptions of Paganism had a distinct place in mediæval Christianity, and suggests how largely that was a mere accommodation to a more ancient cult.

The traditional story of Christianity is backed up by authority, wealth, power. It is taught at the public cost to children in schools; it is inculcated by thousands of hireling men of God; and all who have dared to question it have been for as long as possible scouted and suppressed. But it is intellectually undermined. The story of the virgin-born miracle-working man-god belongs to a semi-savage state of society; the facts are becoming known, and they explode the fiction of the Churches.

No matter though it towers to the sky  
And darkens earth, you cannot make the lie  
Immortal, though stupendously enshrined  
By art in every perfect mould of mind;  
Angelo, Rafael, Milton, Handel, all  
Its pillars, cannot stay it from the fall.

The Pyramid of Imposture reared by Rome,  
All of cement for an eternal home,  
Must crumble back to earth, and every gust  
Shall revel in the desert of its dust;  
And when the prison of the Immortal Mind  
Hath fallen to set free the bound and blind,  
No more shall life be one long dread of death;  
Humanity shall breathe with ampler breath,  
Expand in spirit, and in stature rise  
To match its birthplace of the earth and skies.

It is anthropology, the fruitful study of man, that must displace theology, the vain study of God; and to this result the interesting department of folk-lore is making its contribution.

J. M. WHEELER.

## GOD AND HUMAN HAPPINESS.

(Concluded from page 212.)

WE endeavored to show, in our article upon this subject which appeared in last week's *Freethinker*, that the belief in God did not affect the happiness of nations, nor avert their misery. It may be urged that believers in most of the superstitions of the world derive an amount of happiness from their belief. But we allege that minds freed from superstitious figments are the more likely to be influenced by agencies that will produce a higher and more lasting happiness than it is possible to receive from any mere speculative faith. It would not be difficult to show that, when in past times the belief in God was more genuine than it is to-day, its consequence was misery, and not happiness. Take, for instance, persecution for heresy. God-believers in all ages have been the most determined and cruel oppressors of those who differed from them upon religious questions. Words fail to adequately depict the horrors and misery that have been caused through the cruelties that have been inflicted upon the human race by those who believed in God. As Dr. Dick, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, writes: "Even in our own island the flames of religious persecution have sometimes raged with unrelenting fury. During two or three years of the short reign of Queen Mary of England it is computed that 277 persons were committed to the flames, besides those who were punished by fines, confiscations, and imprisonments" (p. 363). The same author adds: "But we need not go back even to the distance of half a century in order to find instances of religious intolerance among Protestant com-

munities and churches; our own times unhappily furnish too many examples of a bigoted, intolerant, and persecuting spirit" (*ibid.*, p. 369). Surely in the midst of such conditions as these, caused by the inhumanity of God-believers, happiness can find no place.

Again, for centuries there was a persistent neglect of attention to those natural causes upon compliance with which the health, happiness, and prosperity of nations depend. The treatment which Roger Bacon received from the God-believers of his day wrought untold miseries upon the world. Well might Dr. Andrew D. White, in his *Warfare of Science*, exclaim: "Thousands of precious lives shall be lost in this century, tens of thousands shall suffer discomfort, privation, sickness, poverty, ignorance, for lack of discoveries and methods which, but for this mistaken religious fight against Bacon and his compeers, would now be blessing the earth" (p. 94). The Doctor admits that all the Atheists who ever lived have not done so much harm as those persecutors did in this one instance. Wars and persecutions have ever been, and they are still, two of the most potent causes of human misery; and these are clearly traceable to the influence of religious faiths and theological institutions by which for centuries humanity has been cursed. "During," says Buckle, "almost a hundred and fifty years Europe was afflicted by religious wars, religious massacres, and religious persecutions; not one of which would have arisen if the great truth had been recognised, that the State has no concern with the opinions of men, and no right to interfere, even in the slightest degree, with the form of worship which they may choose to adopt." Unfortunately, God-believers have failed to recognise this "great truth," hence they have marred the happiness of mankind. In modern times a modification of the effects of belief in God has taken place, in consequence of a determined opposition towards the old idea of theology which has been created by the enlightenment of the human mind. Side by side with the belief in God, not only has social happiness been unattainable, but even life itself has been in danger, and liberty, the breath of intellectual life, has been in jeopardy every hour. It is an admitted fact that in England to-day the secular law and indifference to theological faith are the main features in preserving social tranquility and personal security.

Of course we are aware that social and political reformers, those men who have attempted to ameliorate the condition of the people, have frequently been termed "Infidels" or "Atheists." But, as George Combe said in his *Constitution of Man*, the charge of "Infidelity" against the advocates of his views was no longer of any importance, and of no avail against the truth. As a matter of fact, most of the discoverers and teachers of new truths, by which the condition of society has been completely transformed, were denounced as acting in antagonism to the will of God, who, it was alleged, ordered all things for the best. As to the popular view in reference to a belief in God, Combe, whose piety was regarded as being unquestionable, in his *Religion and Science* employs this emphatic language: "Disguise the fact as we will, God's secular Providence is a power that in *this* world shapes our destinies for weal or woe." Even in his day he found that "society, including the Calvinistic world itself, proceeds in its secular enterprises on the basis of natural science." All this will be admitted by those who are called "advanced Christians," who, although they cannot deduce from science that God is directly concerned in promoting human happiness, still profess to believe in a book that says he is. Hence arises the question, assuming the existence of God: Does he, under any circumstances, interfere in human affairs? and, if he does, will not that destroy all certainty in the operations of nature and the laws of human life and well-being? We allege that, if God does interfere in human affairs, no results can be depended upon with any degree of certainty; the law of cause and effect would be of little or no value. Here we come in direct conflict with the fundamental conclusions of natural science—namely, that there is an invariable order of nature. We are not now concerned as to *why* this is so, but only as to the fact that there is such observed uniformity of causes and consequences; and that, if the belief in God's interference were true, the stability of natural law would not exist. Either theology or science must be accepted; and those influenced by known facts, rather than by conjecture and assumption, should have no hesitation as to their choice.

Passing from these deeper aspects of the question, let us

look at the world in which we live and move every day. What is the lesson here presented? Is it not evident that something besides belief in God is essential to human happiness? Is it not also clear that natural beliefs as regards our duty to our fellow creatures, apart from any reference to God, seriously affect and alter the conditions of social life? Practically it is not God, but man, who is the principal factor in promoting the happiness, and in diminishing the misery, of human existence. We can form some idea of the results of a widespread sympathy and goodwill among men, founded purely upon self-interest and the common good. Were these virtues to exist more than they do, society would be more or less transformed into an improved dwelling-place for mankind, and each member of the community would have reason to regard others as being worthy of association and respect. In modern England there is ample evidence that, by intelligence, unity, and reliance upon secular effort, the sum of human happiness can be increased, and the amount of suffering lessened, without any dependence on, or appeal to, the God whom many reverence. The health of society has been improved, the inevitable misfortunes that overtake men to a certain extent have been provided for, and all this has been done by human means, and not in consequence of a belief in God. Rectitude and self-help are the hinges by which the door is opened to the increased comfort and happiness of our modern life. There is a French proverb to the effect that "Heaven helps those who help themselves"; but, if people have the power to help themselves, they can leave heaven out of their calculations.

However consoling the belief in God may be to the emotional believer, the fact remains that such a belief is not enough to make life worth having. From time immemorial the belief has obtained, and so have pain, suffering, and premature death. They abound at the present time, and no faith in God will alter these natural conditions. Orthodoxy may teach that all the evils of life are unappreciated blessings, and a part of the universal good; but we cannot believe such an absurdity. Rather than be imposed upon by such an explanation of the world's unhappiness, we would prefer to subscribe to the ancient couplet:—

God has left us, human elves,  
To cut and shuffle for ourselves.

CHARLES WATTS.

### THE ANATOMICAL SEAT OF THE SOUL.

YEARS ago, when the writer was a constant student in the dissecting room, he derived nearly as much benefit from his study of the dissectors, as they pored and labored over their work, as he did from his unravelling the various structural parts of the human form before him on the table. Some of the would-be future Galens were noisy and talkative as they more or less thoughtlessly plied their scalpels; others were practical in the extreme, caring only to acquire the knowledge necessary to serve them in the examining room, and for future professional use; some were there to study anatomy for anatomy's sake; and, finally, some wore long and thoughtful faces, as though their researches brought them only unpleasant themes for contemplation, and that they did not relish the consideration of the various problems which confronted them; while others silently pondered as they traced out skilfully muscle, nerve, artery, or vein. Sometimes it would seem that even a cast of superstition could be detected in the features of one or another, and this was frequently prompted by some remark made when all in the room had worked on for a long time in silence. It would crack out in the great, cold room when one least expected it; and that the hands of the clock had got round to the wee hours of morning, and everything in the old place, dimly lit as it was, had a peculiar "smelly," dismal, ghastly air about it, by no means improved matters.

"Say, Hinman, you are a devout Christian, and have been hacking away for a month on that fantastic-looking 'stiff' in front of you; have you found anything in it yet which looks anything like a soul, or any place to stow one away?"

"No, I've not, you prince of grave robbers; but you did not expect me to find it in the fellow's bowels, did you?"

"Oh, no; but I thought that you might be a modern apostle of that benighted crew who believed with Descartes that the seat of the soul is in the pineal gland, or with those blessed with a greater plasticity of mind who locate it, cock sure, in the brain or in the heart."

Then a third would chime in: "Stuff and nonsense; you fellows, what are you talking about? We will have Hinman saying next that he believes in the resurrection, and in those absolutely impossible anatomical and utterly absurd personalities—the six-limbed vertebrates, which for ages the Christian Church has talked about and painted as angels."

"What's the matter with their six limbs, my boy?"

"Oh, nothing, only it is in total violation of everything known and natural in nature's plan. Does it happen to occur to you that of all the millions upon millions of vertebrates which have lived upon this earth, man included, no single one of them ever possessed more than two pairs of limbs?"

"Of course it has; you unmitigated magazine of conceit and facts, don't you suppose that I know that a man's arms correspond to the wings of a bat or a bird, and the rest of it, and that it was the priests who invented the wings for the church angels, so that at the resurrection they would have something to sail aloft with, when the time should come?"

"I'd give something pretty to have the skeleton of one of them. I'd like to see how the humerus of one of those time-honored angel's wings articulated with the ribs and scapula on the chap's back!"

"Yes, it would be an odd-looking joint; wouldn't it?"

Then there would be a silence for ten or fifteen minutes, broken only by the movements of the students, the scratching of the scalpels, the dripping in the sink, and a rat gnawing at discarded bones and "material" in a dark and distant corner of the room.

Presently, however, another tilt would be taken. "Look here, McAllister, I'll bet you the skull in this cadaver of mine here that you cannot tell me now the differences which distinguish angels from souls, and souls from ghosts, and ghosts from angels, or any way with which you may be pleased to compare them."

"Oh, yes, I can; for angels are the mythical people wherewith a superstitious organisation called the Church has stocked a mythical heaven; the soul is something to be saved; and ghosts, well, why ghosts—ghosts, you know, are something which Dr. Coues told us all about in the *Nation* over ten years ago."

"Why, what did he know about them?"

"Know about them? I like that. Coues? Why, Coues knows all about them; he simply knew all. He testifies that of his own personal knowledge he has handled, seen, smelt, heard, and done everything except weigh a ghost upon a pair of hay scales; that a ghost can pass out of a person and pass back again at will; that the person can control it after it has left the body; that he's got, by Jove, in his private collection to-day specimens of the toe nails of ghosts and hair clothing, and—"

"Wah, hold on there now, McAllister, don't, don't, for pity's sake, for that is as bad as the Church's six-limbed angels."

"Well, if you do not believe it, you had better go and look up the copy of the *Nation*, which has it all in, published on Christmas Day, I believe, 1884."

"You mean to say that Coues believes in the spiritualisation of such materials as the clothing which we wear?"

"Of course he does, or else he would never have printed the statement, and then let it stand."

For a little while the conversation again held up, the room was becoming bitterly cold, the eyes of the rat over in the far dark corner glistened like a pair of pale emeralds, and he still nibbled away at something which looked for all the world like an old piece of dried-up brain.

"Hinman, when a man has an arm amputated, or has a lost limb, do you believe that the man's ghost is also without the same limb?"

"Of course I do; for you don't suppose I believe every time a person parts with a chip of himself, which is not again reproduced, that the fragment is likewise endowed with a chip of 'soul stuff,' do you?"

"No, I don't suppose that you do believe that; and, from what you say, you believe that a one-armed man has within him a one-armed ghost, or his soul is one-armed; or

as a theologian would say, his angel will, when it arises, also be one-armed?"

"Exactly."

"Then, of course, you believe it for any other unreplicable structure which a man may lose during life?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then, Hinman, you've heard of men losing their scalps and living, haven't you?"

"Of course I have."

"And their ears?"

"Yes."

"And you believe that their ghosts would appear without either scalp or ears?"

"I have no doubt about it."

"And their eyes?"

"Yes."

"Of course, you are aware that it is possible for a man not only to lose his scalp, ears, and eyes, and live; but also his tongue, his cheeks, his teeth, his tonsils; part of his skull and brain; his ear-drums, his lower jaw; his lips, his nose, the roof of his mouth—and still live, mind you?"

"Oh, yes."

"You believe yet that his ghost would present the same losses?"

"I see no way out of it."

"Well, the same man can lose (and still live) his arms, his shoulder-blades, numerous structures in his throat, a number of his ribs, mammary glands, and superficial muscular parts; both of his legs at the hips, and his entire genitalia, a kidney, the gluteal muscles, his collar-bones, part of his liv——"

"Oh, hold on, old fellow. I know that all that is possible, if the operation be done upon a healthy man, with due allowance for recovery each time; but if I let you go on, you'll leave me no place for my ghost to occupy in the chap's body!"

"No, that's so, especially inasmuch as I've already removed considerably over fifty per cent. of your man; and I see no reason why his ghost should not be in my pieces of him, as in that thing which you have left over there. Keep whittling him down, Hinman, and let him come to each time—he'll stand it; then snap him open suddenly, and you will find where his ghost is. Perhaps old Descartes may have been right after all, for you cannot take a man's pineal gland away and have him live. Phew! it's cold in her. I'd hate to have the ghost of that thing which you've got over there, Hinman, follow me round!"

"Well, if the ghost of the thing could only walk, which, of course, I must now admit it cannot, I'd put on a brand new suit of Dr. Coues's spiritualised garments, and send him over to you—it would hardly need much."

"Do you know, McAllister, it is a good thing for people, and sometimes for other animals, that there is no immaterial part to the bits they lose of themselves during life? For instance, it would go hard on that rat over there if the day of resurrection should crack on us just at this very moment—there'd be a commotion in his stomach, sure!"

"What are you bragging about? for you are just as much of a carnivorous animal as that rodent is; and the day of resurrection may catch you at the breakfast-table tomorrow morning with half-a-dozen raw oysters in your stomach!"

"Ha, ha! now I have got you; for whoever heard of the ghost of an oyster, or of the soul of an oyster, much less of an oyster-angel?"

"Well, I'd like to know why not; for I take it that you are an evolutionist, and that, if man has a soul, it is quite out of the question to deny the toadstools one—there is no dividing line up the scale or down. Michelet of France, you know, gave one to the bird—and why not?"

"Oh, no reason, that I can see—that is, just now."

"Funny, isn't it? the world's full of it, they say; for where there is life there, too, is the imperishable evidence of the thing which lives. Crush a sparrow's egg, and you set it loose; stamp on an ant-hill, and the setting free of a perfect host of little ant-ghosts is the result."

The hands of the clock had got round to 3.15 a.m.—surely time for all hands to put away their ghastly playthings for that day, at least.

Hinman was about to ask what would happen were the ghost of McAllister to pick up the ghost of that woman's thigh-bone there, and throw it at the ghost of the rat over yonder in the corner—what would the ghost of the man's

brain in his stomach do? But an objection to this was sustained, and the party fled out into the darkness.

—*Boston Investigator.*

R. W. SHUFELDT, M.D.

## INTOLERANCE REBUKED.

"WHEN I heard that the university had declined to allow Colonel Ingersoll to speak before the members of its law class, I expressed myself to the effect that, if I were made the recipient of an invitation to address the same body, as I heard I was to be, I should decline, on the ground that any institution that was so narrow as to prohibit a member of the Bar of such eloquence and ability as Robert G. Ingersoll from speaking, simply because he held religious views that differed from those of its directors, was not worthy of listening to any self-respecting man."

Dr. Chauncey M. Depew paused to take breath. With a *Recorder* reporter he was discussing the fact that the State University at Lawrence, Kansas, had declined to allow Colonel Ingersoll to speak before its law class because of the views on religion held by the latter.

Dr. Depew, while delivering himself of the above rather long sentence, showed that he was fully in earnest in what he said by emphatic gestures.

"When a man speaks to a body of students on law or any other subject," the doctor continued, "he speaks to them on that subject alone, and, no matter what his views on religion are, they don't make a particle of difference. He is not going to influence his hearers in regard to anything but the subject upon which he is talking."

"It is really beyond me how a man or a body of men could be so narrow as to prevent a lot of students from listening to a man who has an international reputation as a lawyer and orator, for the simple reason that he happens to hold his own views on religion. A man has a perfect right to hold any views he likes on any subject, and, as I say, if those views are not what he is going to speak on, they are not going to conflict with the matter he does discuss. Colonel Ingersoll was not going to talk about religion, but about law, and it was, therefore, the height of absurdity for the men who control the college to decline to allow him to speak. They should have felt highly honored that he was willing to do so, and I am sure that the students would have been greatly benefited by the lecture. They are the losers, not Colonel Ingersoll. As I say, I would not make an address before a college whose board of managers were men of such narrow minds as these men have shown themselves to be in this matter. I was not asked to speak, I repeat; but their invitation would have been but a waste of their time."

"Do you coincide with the Colonel's religious views?"

"Ah, my boy, my own views on religion are too well known to need discussing. You know them, so do a lot of other people. I do not talk about them much, but I have them just the same. But whatever they say of me they can't say I'm narrow-minded, and the Kansas State University will never have the opportunity of listening to me, I assure you."

"*Truthseeker*" (*New York*).

## ACID DROPS.

ITALY, of course, is a Christian nation, and, like most other Christian nations, it is engaged in military business where, properly speaking, it has no business. Why on earth it should go all the way to Abyssinia to fight the natives is not very intelligible, especially as the Abyssinians are Christians and not "heathen." King Menelik, in fact, has written a letter, which has been printed in our newspapers, expressing his surprise at the wickedness of the Christian nations of Europe. Among other offences, he says that they persecute the Jews, who are fully tolerated in Abyssinia, and are excellent citizens.

Christian nations are fond of fighting, when there is anything to be got by it; but they don't care to use their armies and navies to save the Armenians from massacre and violation. Indeed, the Armenians have lately asked, in their appeal to the English people, "Is English sympathy to take the form of a cross upon our graves?" This is a new "sign of the cross," which we commend to the attention of the Christians who are singing the praises of Mr. Wilson Barrett's melodrama.

Hugh Price Hughes has held a memorial service at St. James's Hall over the Armenians who have already been massacred. No doubt this will do the dead a lot of good. It is also refreshing to hear that the Evangelical Alliance is

arranging for a week of special prayer all over the world for the persecuted Christians of Armenia. If anything will paralyse the hands of the Turks and Kurds, that will. Pah! pah! Christianity, thy name is hypocrisy!

The anniversary of God's death should, indeed, be a solemn occasion. But most people treat it as a holiday, and visit their friends. A large firm of pious drapers in North London made Good Friday the occasion of a spring cleaning. Christianity is "the greatest thing in the world," but few Christians let it interfere with cash.

"A Loyal Churchman" writes to the *Bristol Mercury* that he visited St. Simon's Church with his wife, and because they took their seats together the officiating clergyman refused to proceed with the service until the sexes were completely separated. The "Loyal Churchman," not appreciating this Romanising method, walked out, having first made his protest against the system, to the indignation of the man of God.

"Henry Irving, the actor," says the *New York Truthseeker*, "thinking to show a little piety in honor of the Lentern season, attended a Chicago church the other Sunday; but the pastor, Rev. Mr. Larrabee, let drive so hard at actors and theatres that Irving had to get out before the services were over."

A Spiritist mejum, by request, inquired of the denizens of "summerland" what was their favorite amusement. The answer came: "Reading our own obituary notices."

Father R. F. Clarke, of the Society of Jesus, writes in the *Month* that the existence of hell is a full proof of God's love, and "those who deny eternity of torture are guilty of robbing hell of its chief terrors, and thus adding to the number of its victims." What horrible wretches they must be who would take away the Jesuit's consolation, the full proof of his Father's ardent love. A friend is fond of saying: "Hell is just fit for those who believe in it." If so, it should be just suited to Father Clarke, who, by the way, is to be head of the New Jesuit Hall at Oxford.

Harry Alfred Long has held his valedictory meeting at Glasgow. He is going to fight the Lord's battles out in Australia, his special object being to put the Bible back into the public schools. Harry Alfred says the Australians wanted him to stay there some years ago, as they don't appear able to grow men of that sort under the southern cross. In fact, as Harry Alfred declares, they would have given him silver for his breakfast and gold for his dinner. He couldn't take on that diet just then, but he is going out to try it now; and it is one that agrees wonderfully well with men of God.

Harry Alfred spoke with pride of his having "debated with Bradlaugh" in Glasgow and Paisley, but he forgot to say when and in what halls these debates were held. Harry Alfred's lack of precision is explained by the fact that he was drawing on his imagination instead of his memory.

Here is another imaginative reminiscence. Harry Alfred stated that ten years ago he went up to the Hall of Science, and this is what happened: "There were 500 infidels and 300 of his own party, and for four days the debate continued, and the majority of the meeting admitted that the Christian had the better of the argument." Now we don't want to call Harry Long a name which would class him among those who are to have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, for it is impossible to take him quite seriously. What we prefer to do is this—we ask Harry Long the exact date of that four days' debate, what was the subject, and who was his opponent? When these questions are answered, it will be time enough to deal with Harry Long's modest story that the infidels declared he had the best of it. Harry Alfred's modesty is an interesting and fertile theme, but let us have the facts first.

"Here is a true story. When Bolton and district was shrouded in darkness on Wednesday forenoon an Irish laborer at a well-known farm was at work in the fields with a companion. He was terribly afraid at the remarkable phenomenon, and, throwing down his tools, exclaimed: 'Come home, Willy, it's the last day.' Rushing to the farm in a terrified state, he lamented that the end of the world had arrived, and exclaimed, 'I've had my last pint!' At a mill not far away there was a rush downstairs, one worker crying out: 'There are three hundred going to heaven at once in the top room!'"—*Bolton Evening News, March 30.*

The Rev. William Jenkins, of Muswell Hill, cannot keep out of the police courts. Week by week he is found exhibiting his Christian temper towards someone or other, and he always fails in his case. His last appearance was as a prosecutor of the Tramway Company for not putting their bye-laws conspicuously in the carriage. He refused to take

a ticket, and demanded to see the bye-law. His summons was dismissed with 23s. 6d. costs.

The *Medical Register* says of the Christian oath: "The person who kisses the Bible in court has not the least surety that his lips do not come in direct contact with the pollution left by a predecessor who was suffering from some foul skin disease or taint, not to speak of the germs of eruptive fevers and the like."

In the convent of Dragomirna, Austria, a novice, named Bartholomew Stojan, who had been weak-minded and ill for years, was kept locked up in a cell in a state of filth, and even lacked food and medicine. The district judge instructed to investigate found the miserable creature thin as a skeleton, clothed in the rags of an old surplice, and lying on a putrid mattress. The cell was in an unmentionable condition of filth. Stojan died next day, and the doctors declared that there could be no doubt that neglect had hastened his end, if it had not altogether caused it. The chief of the convent was a man of great ignorance, scarcely able to write his name.

Stojan's sister repeatedly attempted to see him, but she was brutally treated and turned out. The Public Prosecutor said that the treatment received by the deceased showed a lack of all human feeling, and must be severely punished. Counsel for the defence pleaded that the accused was too ignorant to see that Stojan was weak-minded and believed him possessed. The chief of the convent was acquitted of having endangered the life of the victim, and was sentenced to pay a fine of four pounds for neglecting his duty. This mild sentence illustrates how religion covers a multitude of sins.

The Life of Issa, a Buddhist history of Jesus, which a Russian named Notovitch palmed off some time ago upon the Christian world, is now authoritatively declared to be a rank forgery. The Chief Lama of the Tibetan monastery where he found this precious document declares that no such manuscript Life of Issa exists, and that Notovitch was never in his life in the building. This will not surprise Freethinkers, who are well aware that Christianity has traded upon frauds all through the ages; but it ought to be humiliating to the orthodox.

St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, was badly watched by "Providence" on Saturday afternoon in last week. Some woodwork caught fire from the heat of the flue in the vestry. The firemen were soon on the spot, and the flames were quickly extinguished. All's well that ends well. But just imagine the combustion of St. Margaret's!

This is an intellectual age. In that great centre of civilisation, New York, they have been exhibiting, for a consideration, a piece of one of the bones of St. Ann, the "grandmother of the eternal God," as a Catholic hymn calls her. The priests have obtained from their credulous dupes thousands and thousands of dollars for the privilege of seeing this bone and kissing the box that contains the "sacred relic." Ingersoll does not often hit out personally, but he has denounced Archbishop Corrigan and Cardinal Gibbons for having nothing to say against this shameless swindle.

The Armenians have long been praying for themselves with the most dire results, if their own accounts are to be believed. Now the Council of the Evangelical Alliance ask for a week of special prayer on behalf of the suffering Christians of Asia Minor. There is one difference between these evangelicals and their deity. They think only of the Christians, and care nothing for the Turks; while their God seems to regard only the Turks, and to care nothing for the Christians.

Foreign missions don't seem to be as flourishing as they used to be in America. The various Baptist missionary societies find it impracticable to hold their May anniversaries this year at Portland, Oregon, for this reason among others, that the badness of the times renders it "extremely difficult to secure funds to meet the pressing needs of the societies." Some time ago the Presbyterians resolved to raise a million dollars to pay off the debt on their Mission Boards, but they have raised only a half of the amount. A great rally was recently held in support of this object, and President Cleveland was bagged as chairman; nevertheless, the dollars roll in very slowly. The Congregational missionary societies are reduced to unprecedented financial straits. The Methodist societies are faring just as badly. Yet it is just at this moment that the Churches are trying to force God Almighty, Jesus Christ, and the Bible into the Constitution of the United States.

The *Independent*, of New York, a religious journal of a similar standing to our own *Christian World*, says the debts of the American missionary societies altogether amount to \$1,500,000 or more. Churches, chapels, and religious socie-

ties give a fine example to the commercial world in the matter of debt.

We see from *African Tidings* that the missionaries at Zanzibar introduce rent along with religion. The natives do not seem to relish paying for their houses quite so well as the promise that all their sins shall be forgiven; and when, in consequence of non-payment, they found their own doors closed against them, they were very indignant; and, says M. A. Cameron, the missionary reporter, very small was the congregation in church on the following Sunday. The reporter adds: "The few who were there heard and repeated to their neighbors a very forcible and timely sermon on our Savior's payment of the tribute money, with the result that next morning some of the women came and asked for work." The natives are said to be "wonderfully docile," so perhaps they will come to appreciate the beauty of rent as well as of rum and true religion.

Archbishop Benson has been celebrating the Tercentenary of the Whitgift Foundation. The *Liberator* reminds him of some awkward historical facts. It says: "The lawnsleeves of Dr. Benson's predecessor are stained with the blood of some of the noblest men who lived in the Elizabethan age. It was Whitgift who hunted down Barrow and Greenwood; it was he who examined them after the manner of an inquisitor; it was he who prevented their petition from reaching the Queen. We have Barrow's own testimony in prison that Whitgift had destined himself and Greenwood to death; indeed, there is reason to believe that the Queen's clemency would have been extended to the two victims but for Whitgift's implacable hate."

Mr. Lecky says, in his new book on *Democracy and Liberty*, that domestic morals in the past have seldom sunk lower than in some countries and periods when divorce was absolutely impossible, and he thinks that a comparison of the domestic morality of countries at the present day where divorce is denied, with those in which it is admitted, will not show any real superiority in the former.

George Macdonald, who writes "Observations" in the New York *Truthseeker*, opens in the issue for March 28 by stating that "the London *Freethinker* espouses the cause of General Booth, of the Salvation Army." Some humorous sentences follow, which show that the statement is not meant seriously; but, lest the more matter-of-fact readers should be misled, we beg to say that the *Freethinker* has all along been an uncompromising critic of General Booth and the Salvation Army. Mr. Foot's *Salvation Syrup* was (and is, for it is still on sale) a most drastic criticism of Booth's "Social Scheme." But our view of the Salvation Army as a religious and social agency is one thing, and our view of Ballington Booth's revolt against his father is quite another thing. Ballington has a perfect right to set up business on his own account, but he should not pose as a sort of martyr because he received fresh marching orders, in common with all the other "Army" lieutenants in various parts of the world. The fact is, Ballington and his wife got too comfortable in New York, and didn't like to leave it; so they have "chucked" the old man and stuck to the Yankee millionaires.

The Raines Bill came into operation in New York State on Sunday. One part of it deals with licences, and seems sensible enough; the other part, however, shows the tyranny to which Temperance will go when it is under the influence of the Gospel. "On Sunday," as the *Daily News* puts it, "there is to be no drinking in restaurants, in clubs, even in private houses, at any rate on the part of those who are not members of the family. The police are empowered to invade the private residence if they suspect that any visitor is taking wine." If this is Republicanism, we prefer Monarchy. What is the use of exchanging a King for a President, in the name of freedom, if a policeman can batter your front door on a Sunday and demand to know whether the man who is dining with you, and drinking a moderate glass with his food, is your brother or your cousin?

The virtuous busybodies who are responsible for such legislation will only intensify the evil over which they lose their heads. The liquor traffic is prohibited in Maine, and there are about four hundred secret rum-shops in Portland alone.

The Rev. Joseph R. Pullman, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who spoke of Mdle. Jane May, the French actress, as "a low Parisian courtesan," is being sued by the lady for heavy damages. Finding he cannot plead justification, as the lady is married and of high character, the man of God is going to let judgment go by default. He thus avows himself a deliberate slanderer, but we suppose he is still good enough for the pulpit.

The *Bombay Guardian* publishes a letter to "General" Booth from the Rev. T. M. Hudson, who was formerly in

the Army, but who says he left it because he was so "convinced of the sham character of the work reported to be done in India, and of the utter futility of any effort of mine, or, for the matter of that, of anyone else in India, to alter it, that I came to the conclusion that an organisation which permitted such things, and not only made their correction impossible, but really seemed to encourage them, could not possibly be of God. There is a fatal flaw somewhere."

Mr. Hudson points out that those who wear the Salvation Army jacket are by no means all of the Army, as the jackets were sold at 8 pice, or less than twopence. Red being the color worn by Brahmanical hermits, it was thought, too, that wearing the red jackets would entitle them to free rice. He says further: "It is suggestive of a good deal that such a number of European officers have left the S. A. from Guzerat, especially staff-officers who knew the inwardness of things. It is all very well for anyone to say that the hardness of the fight drove them away; it is not true. It was because they could not be liars and hypocrites, as they would have been had they remained. They despaired, as I did myself, of obtaining any redress or seeing any change. I commenced to write to London when I found out how things were, but, instead of straightforward, honest inquiry and reform taking place, I was ordered in a soft-soapy letter to go to Bombay and edit the *War Cry*. This I did not do, being too sick (in more senses than one)."

The *Times of India* calls the Salvation Army in that country "a great hollow sham." It declares it has undeniable evidence that the Rev. Mr. Hudson's letter reached the "General." Yet he neither acknowledged the document nor asked his representative what answer is to be made to it. This leading paper says: "One native officer in Guzerat, we are informed, has just left the Army because he is tired of looking in his district for over a thousand soldiers who are on the rolls, but not one of whom can he find in the flesh. In some instances—numerous enough, we are assured, to have made the practice an essential part of the system—the subordinate officers have been instructed not on any account to strike names off the roll. The order is to recognise no reduction of strength, and to keep up the numbers on paper at all cost. It almost seems as though, in order to live and work in the Army and enjoy good repute with the powers that be, an officer must be, in Mr. Hudson's words, a liar and a hypocrite."

The only bread the Jews can take at Passover time is the unleavened bread or tasteless Motzas, and this year the wealthy bakers made a "corner" with them, so that they could be procured nowhere under sixpence a pound, a price which made the poor Jews of East London go very short indeed. This weakened the faith of several in the divine institution of Pesach.

Mr. J. W. Hillier, having read our articles on *The Sign of the Cross*, and feeling that Mr. Barrett had approached the subject in a spirit of partisanship, wrote a letter to that gentleman suggesting that he should follow it by another play dealing with later times and the persecutions inflicted by Christians on those who differed from them. Mr. Barrett's reply is as full of "sentiment" as a speech by Joseph Surface, but it is sadly lacking in logic. "No good," he says, "would accrue from such a play as you describe. It must engender bitterness. The cause of humanity could not be served by showing that many who professed Christianity neglected the first principles of its teaching. No mud thrown at St. Paul's Cathedral injures the Christian religion or helps the cause of truth. No false priest destroys the beauty of Christ's teaching." This is all very fine, but remarkably one-sided. To show how Christians were persecuted by Pagans is to help humanity, but to show how Christians persecuted independent thinkers is to engender bitterness! The real meaning of Mr. Barrett's policy, we take it, is simply this—that it pays better to flatter Christians than to tell them the truth. Agreed! Next business!

The *Freeman's Journal* evidently understands freedom as the right of every man to be a good Irishman, if possible, and a good Catholic for certain. It denounces the "blasphemous stuff" which is "spouted" by Hyde Park lecturers, and hopes the Home Secretary will be able to frame a new rule that will stop their mouths, "without interfering with the rights of legitimate public meeting in the park." Legitimate meetings are, of course, Christian meetings, though if they were plainly called so the cat would be out of the bag.

Home Rule is as good for London as for Ireland. Let the Dublin people look after Phoenix Park if they choose. We don't want them to look after Hyde Park. The people of London don't want Dublin assistance or Dublin advice in this matter.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—April 12, South Shields—May 3 and 4, Birmingham; 10 and 17, Plymouth. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

JAMES and JOHN McGLASHAN (Glasgow) send £1 for Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, with which they are "greatly pleased."

JAS. THOMPSON (Renfrew) says: "Your lecture scheme is admirable, and well worthy the support of the rank and file of the party."

G. McCLUSKEY (Devonport) thinks Mr. Foote's lecture scheme "a grand one." Being late with his subscription, this correspondent sends twice what he intended to give, and hopes other laggards will follow his example. Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, we may add, is shortly to be applied to the Plymouth district. Early in May lectures under it will be delivered by Mr. Charles Watts at Tavistock, Plympton, Ivybridge, Liskeard, etc.—places that have never been worked before.

J. FARMER.—One Secular Society withdrew from the N.S.S. in Mr. Bradlaugh's time, and Mr. Foote afterwards induced it to re-enter. One Secular Society has withdrawn, and made itself entirely local, since Mr. Foote became President. The "many Secular Societies who have withdrawn from the N.S.S." is purely imaginary, and ought not to have appeared in print without editorial correction.

E. DREWEN.—Pleased to see your letter in the *Clarion*. It will do good there.

O. P. Q. (Greenock).—Excellent! The insertion of such a letter in your local press shows what advance has been made in general broad-mindedness of late years.

DAVID SMITH.—Your letter must have miscarried. Did you keep the number of the Postal Order?

BAKER (Leighton Buzzard) wants to know whether there are any Freethinkers in that neighborhood. Replies can be addressed to Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

J. SEDDON.—Better let such creatures go their own way, and go yours. You will never get any honesty out of them, and you will never put any into them.

FAIRPLAY.—We agree with what you say, but it would scarcely be prudent to publish your letter.

G. E. SUMNER.—Like yourself, we cannot quite understand the inactivity of the Grimsby Secularists.

BRADLAUGH RADICAL (Northampton).—We don't care two straws about any parliamentary candidate's chances in comparison with the welfare of Freethought. Mr. Bull did write to us some time ago, but nothing can be done unless you can procure us the use of a decent hall for a Freethought meeting. Find such a hall, and Freethought propaganda shall soon be resumed in Northampton.

J. W. HILLIER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." Mr. Foote's pamphlet on *The Sign of the Cross* is bulkier than he expected. It will be ready next week.

W. J. GAINES.—Cobbett's *Legacy to Parsons* is published (we think) at a shilling. No doubt Mr. Forder could obtain you a copy. Burns' *Ecclesiastical Law* would probably not be found in an ordinary Public Library. Of course it could be seen at the British Museum.

CORRESPONDENTS who give no name or address are once more notified that their communications cannot be attended to.

R. J. MURRAY.—Mr. Watts is responsible for what appears over his signature. You had better write to him direct.

H. K. (Greenock).—Thanks. Pleased to have your warm approval, founded on actual experience, of the President's Lecture Scheme.

N. (Sheffield).—Your envelope was unstamped, and as your letter gave no address it has only just reached us after going through the dead letter office.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Open Court—Twentieth Century—The Post—Islamic World—Crescent—Progressive Thinker—Boston Investigator—Freidenker—Secular Thought—Torch of Anarchy—Dunoon Observer—De Dageraad—Zoophilist—Humanity—Hull Daily News—Workers' Friend—Isle of Man Times—New York Public Opinion—Kansas Lucifer—Liberty—Illustrated London News—African Tidings—Bulletin Mensuel—La Libre Pensée—Blue Grass Blade—Secular Thought—Dominion Review—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Times of India—Chatham Observer.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

## SPECIAL.

I AM negotiating for the occupancy of a West-end hall for regular Sunday evening lectures, and I expect to make a definite announcement in next week's *Freethinker*. Meanwhile, I have taken St. James's Hall (the Banqueting Room) for two more Sunday evening lectures, on April 19 and 26. The bills are being printed, and any friend who can exhibit one, or circulate handbills, should communicate at once with Miss Vance, at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. St. James's Hall meetings are, of course, very expensive, and I ask the London friends to do their best to fill the room on both occasions. It will be a kind of demonstration before our regular operations in the hall previously referred to. On my part, I will see that the lectures are as good as I can make them.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had to cancel his engagement at New Brompton when he was advised to discontinue platform work for a while. It is right, therefore, that the Chatham Branch should now have the first claim on his services. He lectures in the Branch's own hall at New Brompton this evening (April 12), and all the ventilation possible will probably be required.

Mr. J. M. Wheeler reads a paper before the Toynbee Hall Elizabethan Literary Society on Wednesday, April 15. His subject is "Marlowe and the Tudor Rationalists," and will be largely a sketch of early Freethought in England. Friends are invited.

On Sunday last Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in South Shields. Being Easter Sunday and very fine weather, the audiences were not so large as usual. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday Mr. Watts lectures in Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesboro', and Stanley, under Mr. Foote's scheme.

To-day (Sunday, April 12) Mr. Watts again lectures three times at South Shields.

The Annual Children's Party (London) was held on Wednesday, April 1, in the large hall of the Club and Institute Union. A crowd of merry children had a fine time from half-past five to half-past ten. First came a tea, and when all were well primed with solids and liquids they were provided with an excellent entertainment. There were games and stage performances, including ventriloquism, conjuring, and a scene from "Good for Nothing," in which Miss Kate Watts capably sustained the part of Nan. Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts were present as spectators, and many parents and friends of the children were in the galleries, where they appeared to be thoroughly enjoying themselves. Miss Vance, who worked very hard, was quite hoarse before the function ended. We cannot enumerate all the ladies and gentlemen who gave their evening to amuse the little ones, but we beg to thank them collectively, and that in the name of the children, whose pleased looks bespoke the thanks they could not frame into a resolution.

Mr. C. Cohen has been in London for a few days. He brought with him the filled-up forms for thirty members of the new Leeds Branch. Mr. Cohen lectures at Manchester for three Sundays, commencing with to-day (April 12), and will be at liberty to lecture in the neighborhood on intervening week nights. Places desiring a visit should communicate with him immediately. Mr. Cohen's account of his missionary work during the past six weeks will appear in our next issue.

Mr. A. B. Moss's superior officers in the service of the London School Board now allow him to affirm in the magistrate's court instead of taking the oath. It has taken several years of hitherto fruitless effort to bring about this happy result. "I tried to affirm," Mr. Moss writes, "as soon as the Act was passed, but was told that the School Board could not employ an affirming witness. Now I am allowed to affirm without a word of objection, as everybody in court, from the magistrate down to the usher, knows my opinions."

Mr. F. C. Conybeare, M.A., is going to deliver a course of Friday afternoon lectures on "Demonology," at University Hall, Gordon-square, W.C. They begin April 17 with "Demonic Agency in the New Testament and the Early Christian Writers." Tickets can be obtained at the hall.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, President of the American Secular Union, has addressed the Judiciary Committee of the States House of Representatives at Washington against the proposal to put "God" in the Constitution. The religionists want to work the following clause into the old Preamble: "Acknowledging Almighty God as the source of all power and authority in civil government, our Lord Jesus Christ as the ruler of nations, and his revealed will as of supreme authority in civil affairs." Mr. Putnam's address was extremely eloquent. It is printed in full in the *New York Truthseeker*, and we hope to reproduce it in our own columns.

The *New York Truthseeker* for March 21 prints Mr. S. P. Putnam's letter, as President of the American Secular Union, inviting Mr. Foote, as President of the National Secular Society, and Mr. Charles Watts, Vice-President, to visit America and attend the Chicago Congress at the end of October. Mr. Putnam, we see, is going to make "a summer campaign to the Pacific coast," and has engagements out there for more than a hundred lectures.

The Liverpool Branch holds its annual meeting this evening (April 12). We hope all members will make it their special business to attend. The meeting will be held at the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street.

The Rev. W. H. Bowers, M.A., Vicar of St. Barnabas, Chatham, has been challenged by Mr. Boorman, on behalf of the local Secular Society, to debate "any one of the subjects he is advertised to deliver in the Church of St. Barnabas with an accredited representative of the National Secular Society, or, failing to do so, he is invited to deliver the same lectures in the Mission Hall, or in the Secular Hall when not engaged, the Secular Hall to be let free of charge; discussion to follow each lecture." The reverend Master of Arts is apparently master of the art of discretion.

The *Dunoon Observer* of March 28 devotes its leader to a vigorous censure of Provost Cooper, who, in the late discussion as to whether the Secularists should have the use, on the customary terms, of the Burgh Hall, declared that, "if he were acting for himself only, he would sweep the burgh clear of such lecturers." The article concludes as follows: "Because another person refuses to accept our code of social morality or orthodox belief, why should we style him a 'boozer' or an 'infidel'? This is surely calumny and cant. At Constantinople every Christian among us, even the 'saint,' would be called a kaffir or infidel. Why will good Christians here imitate the 'unspeakable' Turk?" Second thoughts are best, and Provost Cooper, we think, on further reflection, will not refuse to others the rights he claims for himself. His bark, no doubt, is worse than his bite.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a special article by Mr. Foote on the new Education Bill. We did not care to publish it during the holidays, as the matter is one of very great and grave importance.

## SHILLING MONTH.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

G. Smith, 2s. 6d.; F. G.; F. H., 2s.; J. Kalsey; B. T., 3s.; G. McCluskey, 3s.; James and John McGlashan, £1; James Thomson, 2s.; G. E. Sumner, 1s. 6d.; Holloway, 2s.; E. G. H., 2s. 6d.; N. (Sheffield), 5s.

*Glasgow* (further list):—Mr. Marr, 10s.; J. Lang, 10s.; Friend, 10s.; R. Turnbull, 2s.; J. Thulkeld, McCormick D. Lambie, Baxter; G. Pollock, 2s.; H. Eyre, C. Mackenzie, G. Bell, Arthur, W. M., F. Phillip; G. Faulkner, 2s. 3d.; W. Clarke, 2s. 6d.; A. and G. H. Cowie, 3s.; Phonograph, 3s.; 1s. 6d.; R. Todd; W. F., 2s. 6d.; P. B., 2s. 6d.; J. Mitchell, J. H.; E. Whinston, 6d.; A. Gilvy, Albion; Moffat, 2s.; M., 3d.; J. Hay.

*Per Charles Watts*:—A Friend in South Shields, 5s.

*Per Miss Vance*:—E. Self, 2s.; T. Ives; H. Goodman, 2s.; A. E. Wade, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Newbrandt, 2s. 4d.

*Greenock*:—H. K., 5s.; J. McC., 3s.; A. C. P., 2s.; T. K., 2s.; O. K., A. M., Radical, Scientist, A. McA., D. K.

## RANDOM NOTES FROM SCOTLAND.

### THE GIFFORD LECTURES.

THE Edinburgh and Glasgow Gifford Lectures for 1896 have just come to a close. The Edinburgh lecturer, Emeritus Professor Campbell Fraser, whose strongest claim to distinction lies in his sound work as editor of a fine edition of Berkeley, has added nothing to his reputation by his performance as Gifford lecturer. As an idealist, it was inevitable that he should strive to show that the universe is intelligible only in terms of mind; but his exposition and defence of this doctrine was much more remarkable for its qualifications and concessions than for constructive consistency. Take, for example, Professor Fraser's treatment of the problem of evil, and that of the miraculous. In the lecture on the former he admitted that the genesis, nature, and final cause of evil were alike inscrutable, but that, as we lived 'in an infinitesimal corner of the vast fabric of things, and could only see the surface even of our immediate environment, we must be content to believe that physical and moral defects were merely incidents in an orderly evolution towards an ultimate perfection. As for miracles, was not the universe itself a standing miracle? And it is for a tissue of threadbare commonplaces and inanities like this that the trustees pay at the rate of £50 a lecture! Really, it would be dear at the price of an old sermon, which is usually a little below zero. It is rather too late in the day to expect us to accept the evasive and self-destructive Optimism of Leibnitz and his school. It was crude enough in the pre-evolutionary period in which it flourished; it is a grotesque anomaly now. Logically considered, the formula, that "partial evil is but universal good," extinguishes all distinction between right and wrong as completely as the much-reviled Pantheism to which it is ostensibly opposed. However, even if we grant the primary postulate of Optimism, and allow that it is unsafe to judge the whole from the part, then, as we are so crassly ignorant of the "true inwardness" of the universe, so much the more reason is there why we should not dogmatise about it one way or another. When the optimist, who is usually a well-beneficed clergyman or crapulous annuitant, smiles benignantly, and pronounces everything to be very good, over the walnuts and the wine, he ought to be reminded that he is ignoring his own self-denying ordinance, and confounding the whole with a part of the part. For, as we are all equally ignorant of final causes, I have as much right to say everything on the Theistic hypothesis is evil, and that evil is our good. If in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king, it is equally true that where nobody knows, there the fool is as much of an authority as the wise man. The paralogism about miracles answers itself. If the sum of existence is a universal miracle, then there cannot be any miracle in particular. It is of the very essence of the idea of a miracle that it should be an event out of the ordinary course of nature; but Professor Fraser empties the idea of its historic content, and inflates it with a metaphysical quiddity of his own manufacture, which does but darken counsel.

The Glasgow lecturer, Principal Caird, was unable, through illness, to deliver the last two lectures of the course, although they will probably be included in the volume in which the lectures will shortly be published. For Dr. Caird's sake, I regret the discontinuance of the lectures; but, even if the world never heard more of them, I don't think it would suffer any grievous loss. Mr. Foote has already exposed the gross perversion of the objects of the Gifford Trust, by the alienation of it, in spite of the express instruction of Lord Gifford to the contrary, into a preserve for theological metaphysicians and metaphysical theologians; but in the case of this year's Glasgow Gifford lecture the action of the Senate of Glasgow University actually amounted to an abrogation of the Founder's prescription. For the convenience of Principal Caird, and to improve the notoriously wretched attendance at the University Chapel, it was decided that the lectures should take the place of the sermon at the services there; and, notwithstanding strenuous protest, the Senate persisted in carrying out this arrangement. Principal Caird's prelections were as little in keeping with the spirit of the Gifford bequest as the practice of the Senate was with its letter. The Principal insisted not on discussing the bases of a possible science of God, but on making a desperate

The curiosities of ceremony in the Church are like the painted glass in church windows—designed to keep out light; not to let it in.—*Samuel Butler, "Thoughts on Various Subjects," 1660.*

attempt to square philosophy and Christian dogma, with the necessary result that, apart from the elegance of diction for which he is distinguished, his discourses are sheer verbiage from beginning to end. What else is to be expected when they deal with such mediæval themes as: How Divinity may assume humanity, and yet not cease to be divine, nor begin to be human? If two independent personalities may co-exist in the same soma, without being aware of their separate existence? Whether the divine hypostasis was prepotent over the human, or *vice versa*? and so on, until in utter bewilderment one is impelled to exclaim with "Truthful James": "Are there visions about? Is the Caucasian a failure? and is civilisation played out?"

I am not one of those who demand the abolition of the Gifford lectureships, and propose that the funds of the Trust should be applied, say, to the furtherance of Technical Education. That, in its way, would be quite as flagrant an abuse of the bequest as that of which we are complaining. Lord Gifford's object was an excellent one. A study of the growth and development of the God idea in the light of the historical and of the anthropological methods cannot but make for intellectual emancipation; and, as a foil to the precision and fruitfulness of those methods, an occasional presentment of the obscurantist view—forgive the paradox—might not be altogether without its uses. Lord Gifford's fatal mistake was in placing the management of the Trust under the exclusive control of those strongholds of Conservatism and pedantry, the Scottish Universities; and until outside influence becomes strong enough to compel these fiduciary bodies to administer the Trust impartially, there is but faint hope of the lectureships becoming truly representative of the widely-diversified processes of modern thought in relation to Theistic speculation.

#### EXIT HARRY ALFRED LONG.

Pray, passenger, do not drop a tear; our only Harry—not Old Harry, but the 'umble missionary who has been factotum in Glasgow for the once famous house of Jehovah, Calvin, & Co. for nearly fifty years—is neither dead nor translated after the manner of Enoch, Elijah, or Bottom the Weaver. He is about to emigrate to Queensland—tell it not in Gath, whisper it not in the streets of Askelon—to reinstate the Bible in the godless secular schools of that God-forsaken colony. Let Wallace Nelson quake in his shoes! and the hosts of the Colonial infidel prepare for fell discomfiture and flight, for Harry is a man of war, like the Lord, and he will smite the foes of his fetish book with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, or with the still deadlier weapon with which Samson slew his thousand Philistines. For nearly half a century "Harry IX.," as he bombastically styles himself, has waged a war of extermination against Giant Pope and the hydra-headed monster, "Infidelity," and he has his guerdon in the fact that he leaves both lustier and more formidable than ever. Verily the Lord is with Israel, and scattereth his enemies as chaff before the wind. Mr. Long has been delivering valedictory speeches at the rate of about three a week for the last three months; but this procrastination does not mean that Mr. Long finds "parting such sweet sorrow," or that he has been smitten by the sinister example of a certain obsolete English tenor. It is all on account of the "law's delays," for the cross actions for libel between him and the nondescript Powell still hang fire; and, although the farewell soiree held in Mr. Long's honor was postponed for a month, the cases are still incubating, and not even Zadkiel can predict the times of their consummation. Meanwhile Mr. Long tarries sadly and fretfully, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord in the name of his servant Paul: "Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Cor. vi. 7). At the farewell soiree Mr. Long spoke very much in the vein of the vainglorious writer of 2 Corinthians ii., and, of course, he had to show that, like the vagrant "Apostle of the Gentiles," he too had "fought with wild beasts at Ephesus." "He had in Glasgow and Paisley debated with Bradlaugh, one of the strongest opponents of Christianity that England had produced. He looked back to these and other contests with gratitude, as great good came from them. God wrought with a small tool." Far be it from us to gainsay the accuracy of the last clause; but, to say the very least, Mr. Long's claim to have debated with Mr. Bradlaugh is couched in most misleading terms.

From the language held nine people out of ten will infer that he met our late leader in set public debate, whereas he never did more than take his turn as an ordinary opponent in the discussion after Mr. Bradlaugh's lectures. We all know that Mr. Long would have given a good deal to engage with Mr. Bradlaugh on equal terms; but, as the latter once remarked, in answer to a "challenge" from Mr. Long, he had something better to do than waste his time with every irresponsible tub-thumper who bawled after him from a street corner. When, therefore, Mr. Long says he debated with Mr. Bradlaugh, either he is ignorant of the plain and customary meaning of the term—which is impossible, for is he not a philologist?—or he is suffering from the species of delusion that led George IV. to believe that he had performed prodigies of valor at the Battle of Waterloo.

Not even his bitterest enemy will accuse Mr. Long of being an exact reasoner or skilled debater. His methods are all of the *ad captandum vulgus* or mountebank order, and he shows to most advantage as an acrobat and jester of the Jack Pudding school. In this line, and especially as a Cheap Jack, distributing Bibles and tracts under cost price, it must be admitted that he is an "amoosin' cuss"; but when he masquerades as a "scholar" and a "thinker," he becomes a usurper and a nuisance. Imagine a "thinker" seeking to prove the historical existence of Jesus and the divine origin of Christianity from the fact that the *Freethinker* is dated according to the Christian era; or who concludes that Christianity wins because there is an enormous circulation of cheap and nasty Bibles; and because, in the vicissitudes of tenancy, Christian missionary societies sometimes oust or succeed Freethought organisations in the occupancy of meeting-places. For depth and originality of scientific knowledge the saintly Kinns is but a Lilliputian to the Brobdingnagian Long, who accepts the Mosaic cosmogony in all its ugly nakedness; laughs at the very idea of evolution, and actually cites as a "proof" of the biological precision of the Bible, in its statement that God made all men of one flesh and blood, the "fact," unknown to any text-book of biology, that whereas it is impossible to distinguish the blood of one variety of the human race from another, it is easy to demonstrate a physico-chemical difference between the blood of man and that of other mammals. And this man has been a member of the School Board for years!

At the farewell meeting a letter from Mr. Rooney, a Roman Catholic, was read, in which he testified that he had never known a more honorable opponent than Mr. Long. I honestly wish I could say as much for the Freethinkers of Glasgow; but I cannot forget, much less forgive, certain passages in our relations with him, and the remembrance of these things disables me from endorsing Mr. Rooney's verdict. Perhaps Mr. Long may have been more chivalrous towards Catholics than he has proved himself to be in our case, although I can recall many instances of his indecent eagerness to believe evil of Papists, on the slenderest evidence, as in the notorious Widdowe's fiasco; but his recklessness of assertion and wantonness of imputation concerning Secularism and Secularists made it impossible for any self-respecting Secularist to esteem him.

Mr. Long expects to restore the Bible to the Queensland schools by the year 1900, when he will return to Glasgow to wipe out any extant remainder of Papists and Pagans. There is surely a trifling error—as with Baxter's prophecies—as to the date. It should be the Greek Kalends, or for ever and the day after. Mrs. Partington stemming the tide of the Atlantic, and the exploit of the Knight of La Mancha tilting at the windmills, weren't "circumstances," as Artemus Ward would say, beside this "deed of high emprise." If the Halls of Valhalla still witnessed the suppers of the gods, and on high Olympus the immortals still made merry over the waywardness and folly of men, what a spectacle for them were this! Even the solitary, morose Jehovah would be moved to grin at it from his perch between the cherubim. Go forth, Harry the Ninth, and learn, if you are capable of learning anything, that the setting up again of the idol upon the altar of the temple, even if you can piece together its scattered fragments, and get the image to stand, will not revive the worship of it. The gods are dead or dying, and through their ruined fanes, once filled with the smoke of altar-fires, and crimsoned with the blood of innocent victims, the blessed sunlight shines and the cleansing winds of Liberty blow.

When I was a boy in the Queensland bush, they told

me a story of the opening of the up-country railway. The black-fellows thought that the locomotive was the white man's devil, and that its appearance in their territory would bring disaster in its train. Accordingly, it was resolved that it should be driven back by force. On the day of the first run the natives assembled in thousands at one point on the line; and when the engine came in sight they set up an unearthly yell, and made a feint of charging at it; but the engine-driver blew the whistle, which threw most of them into a wild panic and caused an instant stampede, and of the few who stood their ground only an odd one or two survived. The rest were crushed to pulp under the great wheels—not of a juggernaut, nor a devil, but of the most powerful pioneer of modern civilisation. Which things are an allegory. J. P. GILMOUR.

### A DISCOURAGED PARSON.

A DRUMMER for the upper route  
Had tickets for the sky,  
And hence resolved to do some work  
Toward fitting men to die.  
So, pulling down his pious phiz  
To a "Lord, we thank thee" look,  
He started out to draw them in  
With "mustard," faith, and book.  
The looked-for sinner hove in sight,  
And great the parson's joy.  
The drunken vagrant clutched his arm  
With "How's yer health, old boy?"  
'O, man of sin," the parson said,  
"You're trembling on the brink  
Of that dread hell where Satan waits  
For all who love strong drink.  
Oh, rise and haste to save your soul!  
Oh, fly the dreadful fate!  
The wrath of heaven pursues you, man!  
Call Jesus ere too late!"  
"Whose name was that?" the drunkard said;  
"Christ Jesus? Well, that's fine!  
Why, that's the very chap, they say,  
'Turned water into wine.'  
Plain water wasn't strong enough  
To help digest his cake,  
And so he made a little wine  
'Just for his stomach's sake.'  
I have to laugh 'bout Solomon,  
The way that he connives—  
'Twas only by his keeping drunk  
He lived with all them wives.  
Besides, we are commanded  
In your 'good book,' I think,  
To spend our money freely  
For oxen, sheep, and drink.  
"Noah and Lot got drunk—what, gone?"  
The parson had passed on  
To meet an erring Magdalen  
With cold, forbidding frown;  
And to her piteous plea for alms  
He drew his hand aside  
And told her of a seething hell  
With portals yawning wide.  
"Men wrought my fall," the wanton said;  
"I could not sin alone;  
And even you, O holy man,  
I dare to 'throw a stone.'  
The Magdalen of Jesus' time  
Was his especial pet,  
And many more in that good book  
Whose names I don't forget."  
The parson drew his cloak aside,  
Nor longer stayed to hear  
The truths his book could not deny,  
Which pained his pious ear.  
So, farther down a narrow lane,  
He sought the Master's cause  
Among some lads who played at dice;  
And here again made pause  
One little fellow played to win,  
And cheated on the sly;  
But he, when charged with the offence,  
Most stoutly did deny.  
"O, vipers, did you never read  
Of brimstone lake of fire  
Prepared for all such wicked boys?  
For God doth hate a liar."  
"Just tell me, then," the small voice said,  
"F it's such an awful thing,  
Why God 'a lying spirit' called

To trick Ahab the king;  
And why old Peter told a lie,  
Denying Jesus thrice.  
I'm sure such things are worse by far  
Than fibbing 'bout our dice.  
I asked the teacher 'bout it, too;  
But, with an awful look,  
She said that I was much too young  
To read God's holy book.  
Now, what's it there for but to read?  
And that's what I did tell her.  
For 'sassing back' she made me learn  
Six pages in the speller."  
The parson made him no reply;  
Spoke of the shade-trees cool;  
Hoped, like good boys, they'd save their dimes  
To bring to Sunday-school.

Across the street an angry son  
Had struck such cruel blow  
Upon his aged father's breast,  
As though 'twere deadliest foe.  
"Hold on, hold on," the parson cried;  
"In this book, my brother,  
The Lord commands the sons of earth  
To honor father, mother."  
"But Jesus don't," the wretch replied;  
"I've read the very line  
Where Jesus says to hate them both,  
Or 'ye are none of mine.'  
And as 'twill get me into heaven,  
This one command I'll keep;  
A blest 'disciple' I will be  
And sit at Jesus' feet."

A murderer calm awaits his doom  
Chained in his prison cell.  
"Ah!" said the parson, "I'll go there  
The 'gospel news' to tell."  
The parson prayed—the felon smiled:  
"Don't waste your holy power,  
For I've repented, and was saved  
Just at the eleventh hour.  
The man I killed went down to hell;  
He warn't prepared to die.  
But I'll receive a harp and crown,  
And dwell with Christ on high."

The parson hurried back to church  
The wondrous tale to tell:  
"A murderer from the burning snatched,  
In paradise to dwell.  
And, O my brethren, up in heaven  
There is more joy to-day  
O'er that one soul than all the rest  
That do not go astray.  
And, while we humbly bow in prayer,  
Let all remember that  
'The Lord the cheerful giver loves';  
Please, deacon, pass the hat."  
The congregation praised the Lord;  
Their pastor was perfection;  
While he knelt down and slyly cursed  
At such a small collection.

—*Snohomish Eye.*

### THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting held at the Club Union Buildings on March 26; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. Charles Watts, W. Heaford, J. M. Wheeler, A. B. Moss, E. Bater, G. J. Warren, C. Johnson, E. W. Quay, H. J. Stace, P. Sabine, A. F. Taylor, T. Gorniot, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed; cash statement received.

The Glasgow Branch reported the arrangements already made for the annual Conference, to be held at the Grand Hall on Whit Sunday, May 24.

The committee deputed to carry out the Children's Party reported that their arrangements were now complete.

On the motion of Mr. Bater, seconded by Mr. Moss, it was resolved that the Annual Excursion take place in August, and the Secretary was instructed to make inquiries re suitable places, in conjunction with Miss Brown (London Secular Federation), and report at the next meeting.

Messrs. J. M. Wheeler and H. J. Stace were elected on the Agenda Committee.

The Lewisham Branch delegate reported that the attendants at outdoor meetings had been threatened with physical violence. The President offered his advice, and promised to attend personally if it became necessary, and also to provide lecturers under his Lecture Scheme.

The meeting adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Assistant-Secretary.*

## BOOK CHAT.

*So-called Sport* is No. 20 of the Humanitarian League's publications. The Rev. J. Stratton writes on "Hunting the Carted Stag," Colonel W. Lisle B. Coulson on "Shooting Pigeons from Traps," and Dr. R. J. Jude on "Coursing the Bagged Rabbit." An excellent Introduction is contributed by Mr. H. S. Salt. We commend this pamphlet to the attention of all who hate the most despicable form of cruelty—cruelty to the utterly helpless. After reading it (or other of the League's publications) themselves, let them lend it round to all their friends and acquaintances.

\* \* \*

*The Path of Progress*, by W. D. Macgregor (John Heywood, London and Manchester), is an able and a very careful criticism of Mr. Blatchford's fascinating *Merric England*. It seems to us to call for a reply from "Nunquam." At any rate, it should be read and digested by those who like to study both, and indeed *all*, sides of a great question.

\* \* \*

*The Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) for April is an excellent pennyworth. The monthly supplement is by Mr. F. J. Gould, who ends with an interrogation—"Was it an Agnostic who wrote the book of Job?" A very interesting answer might be given to this question.

\* \* \*

W. J. Linton's *Memories* (Lawrence and Bullen), though very scrappy and discursive, contain many matters of interest to Freethinkers. Mr. Linton, in his young days, was in the thick of the fight for the liberty of the press, and has in his time come in contact with many leading Freethinkers. Of James Watson he has already written a special memoir. Henry Hetherington is frequently mentioned. Mr. Linton says: "Hetherington was a leader of men, a ready and effective speaker, plain, pathetic, humorous, or sarcastic, as occasion required; a bold thinker and a good organiser, prompt, energetic, earnest, and devoted."

\* \* \*

Of Mr. George Jacob Holyoake Linton speaks in a very disparaging fashion, tempting us to think his own toes have been trodden upon. One of his remarks is so unjust that we must notice it. He says of G. J. H.: "He began his public life by a foolish provocation of prosecution for blasphemy, thereby gaining such credit and notoriety as might be due to the Last Martyr for Atheism." This is a grossly unfair account of the circumstances which led to Mr. Holyoake's imprisonment, and it is the more shameful as Mr. Linton himself wrote in the *Oracle of Reason* anonymous parodies which might with greater justice be styled "a foolish provocation of prosecution for blasphemy." Of Mr. Bradlaugh he speaks more justly: "Certainly it should be said that this indefatigable iconoclast was a kindly-natured man, as one may be even if a born fighter."

\* \* \*

Of Harriet Martineau Linton says: "Plain, judging from her portraits, far from prepossessing in her young days, she had become with age a good-looking, comely, interesting old lady, very deaf, but cheerful and eager for news, which she did not always catch correctly. With all her manly self-dependence and strict, intentional honesty, with all her credit for practical common sense, she was as much a poet at heart as her brother, the Rev. James." Comparing Francis William Newman with his brother, the Cardinal, Mr. Linton describes him as "not a man of the same high genius, but a man of culture and fine thought, with excellent sympathies and intentions, but, as it seemed to me, hesitating in action and always appearing to doubt if his accepted course had been really right in politics. He, I used to think, ought to have stooped under the yoke of the Roman Church and John Henry to have stood upright as a leader of progress, which he might have been."

\* \* \*

Mr. Linton's book is full of memories of celebrated men he has met. Carlyle he disparages, perhaps because he did the like towards Linton. Dickens, too, he did not esteem. He says: "For all his genius as a novelist, I have always thought that his real vocation was as an actor of low comedy, much as the world might have lost by such a change. Warm-hearted and sentimental, but not unselfish, he was not the gentleman. There was no grace of manner, no soul of nobility in him." Linton's heroes were Stanilas Worcell and Joseph Mazzini. Of the last named he says: "His great career, his genius, his deeds, and his worth are written on the scroll of History in characters which even the inventive pen of Detraction cannot now belittle. He stands, as I believe, the greatest man in this nineteenth century; none greater in the years of Time, the Prophet of the Future." Mr. Linton is hearty in his likes and his dislikes. There is much of interest in his *Memories*, but a carefully-kept and arranged autobiography would probably have been of much greater interest and value.

The firm of Nijhoff, of Gravenhage, are bringing out an important book in Dutch, by K. O. Meinsma. It is entitled *Spinoza en Zijn Kring* ("Spinoza and his Circle"). A second title is "Historical Critical Studies in Dutch Freethought." Herr Meinsma has, we understand, made special researches into the events of the life and times of Spinoza, and his work will be an important contribution towards the history of Freethought in Holland.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### UNITARIANS AND THE BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am sure you do not intentionally intend to misrepresent Unitarians when, in your issue of March 29 (p. 200), you advise them to throw over the pretence of regarding the Bible as God's word." I have, I think, a very fair acquaintance with Unitarianism and Unitarians, and certainly, so far as my knowledge serves me, they entertain no such doctrine in respect to the Bible as you seem to impute to them; and, while regarding themselves as, and calling themselves, Christians, as they understand the Christian religion as taught by its great Teacher, are yet found among the true friends of Freethought, not only in respect to the Bible, but as touching every other concern and interest of humanity. This, at least, is how I, as a Unitarian, am acquainted with Unitarianism.

A READER OF "THE FREETHINKER."

## PROFANE JOKES.

Minister (baptising child)—"In the name of the Father—Hopeful Mother—"Hold on a minute, parson. Make it in the name of his uncle. He's got \$20,000 in the bank."

Missionary—"And what will you do, John, when I am gone?" Chinaman—"Me chin-chin my own joss."

A DOWNFALL.—Wanderer—"Yes'm, a few years ago I was just rollin' in wealth." Kind-hearted Housekeeper—"Poor man; here is a quarter. Drink did it, I suppose?" Wanderer—"No'm; religion!" Kind-hearted Housekeeper—"Religion?" Wanderer—"Yes'm; I was one of the most ablest burglars in the country, but I got religion, and can't work at me trade no more."—Puck.

The title of the *Woman's Bible* having been much criticised, Elizabeth Cady Stanton recently wrote to a friend: "The *Woman's Bible* is the most happy title that could have been selected. I am sure that 'Woman's Commentaries on What the Bible Says of Woman' would have been too lumbering. When John Stuart Mill gave his little book the title of *The Subjection of Woman*, everybody carped at it. Mill said he knew he had hit the right title, because everybody was down on it. I am sure our title is the true one for the same reason. The position of woman is the greatest question treated in the Bible, of far more importance than all the rest put together. Her position is the key to the whole Christian system. Those who complain that I am flippant must remember that I hold the Bible, like any other book, as emanating from the brain of man—in plain English, I do not think we need be profound scholars, Biblical critics, or linguists to understand and repudiate the rib story, or Noah and his Ark, or Moses talking with the Lord on Mount Sinai. Why was no woman permitted to so ascend or descend? Why did the women not have their share of the consecrated meat or bread? Why was not a female lamb as good as a male for a burnt-offering? Are such questions proper from Hebrew and Greek scholars only?"

The *Black-Coats*, generally taken, are a sort of ignorant tinkers, who, in matters of their own profession, such as the mending and soldering men's consciences, have made more holes than they found.—Thomas Hobbes, "On Liberty and Necessity" (in the *Epistle to the Reader*); 1654.

## Obituary.

DIED at Flushing, Falmouth, on April 4, Samuel Fox. Of delicate constitution, his death was probably accelerated by his imprisonment for hat wearing in church. He was of Quaker descent, and upheld the early teaching of the Quakers as to the superiority of the Spirit to the Word. At the time of his death he was engaged on two works—one on the Hat Crusade, and another and larger one dealing with Custom.

## 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.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, a lecture; 9.15, social party.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Touzeau Parris will lecture.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James, "Science versus Creeds."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. H. Harris, "War and Personal Adventure."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Professor Adamson, "The Idea of Progress."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Harry Courtney, "The Upshot of Secularism."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Atonement."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones will lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, a lecture; 3.30, F. Haslam will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Recollections of Charles Bradlaugh."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Resurrection."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, a lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, H. Card will lecture.

BLACKBURN: Fortnightly meeting at 18 Peter-street. Saturday, tea party and dance at the Spinners' Institute.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Wheale, "The Freedom of the Mind"—a Christian's reply to a recent lecture.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, G. W. Foote, "The Curse of Creeds."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Jargon of Theology"; 2.30, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?" 6.30, "The Dream of Immortality."

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, quarterly meeting.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, King Prempha, "South Africa."

LEEDS (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): 7, R. Baines, "Genesis and Science."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Arthur Alexander, "The Conflict between Religion and Science." Annual meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Individual Liberty v. State Interference"; 6.30, "Atheism: Its Meaning, Morality, and Justification."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, members' quarterly meeting; 5, tea; 7, T. W. Bundy, "Microbes" (with lantern illustrations).

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, Charles Watts, "The Christian Deity"; 3, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 7, "The Science of Life, from a Secular Standpoint."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSELY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "The Education Crisis"; 6.30, "Tales and Wonders of Jesus."

MANCHESTER (Stevenson-square): 3, C. Cohen will lecture (if weather favorable).

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 12, 19, and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 12, Mile End; 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow. May 3, Failsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

## POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

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