

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

THE title of this article will be explained as we proceed. At present let it suffice to say that the reader need not expect a sermon on the lady and gentleman who were struck dead for trying to take in the Holy Ghost.

In the *Daily Telegraph* of April 28 there appeared the following paragraph:—

“Some years ago, especially during the lifetime of the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., the Hall of Science, in Old-street, St. Luke’s, was the home of militant Secularism, or, as some people preferred to call it, Atheism. It will soon cease to possess that characteristic, for the Salvation Army have become its proprietors, and intend to use it as a shelter for women.”

“It will soon cease to possess that characteristic” is a very belated expression. The ignorant reader would imagine that the poor Secularists were packing up their belongings and preparing to make their exit, while the Salvationists were waiting to enter the premises; whereas the Secularists left the Hall of Science nearly twelve months ago, and were not turned out or supplanted by any religious body whatsoever, but were simply the victims of a villainous Christian law which robs them of the common rights of citizenship; for it is pretty certain that no Hall Company would ever have been formed if it had been possible to devote property in trust for Secular purposes, and in that case the commercial difficulties and dangers of such an enterprise would all have been avoided.

Other journals besides the *Daily Telegraph* have printed paragraphs on this subject. All of these, however, are obviously founded on the paragraph in the May number of the *Deliverer*. Under the heading of “Personal Notes”—which turns out to be a most appropriate title—Mrs. Bramwell Booth contributes a number of paragraphs on “Rescue Work,” as the Salvation Army calls its pottering with what is euphemistically described as “the social evil.” After gushing piously about her own recent illness, and the death of two children belonging to two different branches of the great Booth dynasty, the lady has something to say about her “Rescue Homes” and the establishment of a new one in an unexpected quarter. We are anxious not to misrepresent the lady, so we reproduce this particular paragraph *in extenso*:—

“Among the abodes of wickedness in London none was more prominent for many years than what was called the Hall of Science, in St. Luke’s. Here the late Charles Bradlaugh, and other kindred haters of the truth, worked to spread infidelity, and I fear I must say also, teaching which involved blasphemy and impurity of a terrible kind. But, like other men, infidels die, and their works fall away, and of late years the Hall of Science has not flourished. The Army has done something to this end, and finally the property was offered to us either on sale or lease, and we are hoping to secure it for a term of years, and propose, if the means are forthcoming, to open it as a Home and Shelter for Women. We shall call it the Hall of Mercy. But I shall want £1,000 to fit it up and make the necessary alterations to receive about 250 women.”

Mrs. Bramwell Booth does not say that the big “Shelter” the Salvation Army used to have further down in Old-street had to be closed, probably for financial reasons; nor that the Hall of Science was offered to the Booths by the ground landlord, after the bankruptcy of the leaseholder, who was a private individual, and not the Secular party; nor that the acquisition of the place by the Salvation Army

is simply a speculation to raise the wind by pandering to orthodox bigotry. What she does say displays the usual Christian temper. The lady bubbles over with that “charity” which Christians are always boasting, and which has made them detested by non-Christians all over the world. She has the impudence to call Charles Bradlaugh a “hater of the truth,” and after this exhibition of intolerance towards a man who made great sacrifices for his convictions, although he did not share hers, she asks for a thousand pounds (to begin with) to fit up “the Hall of Mercy.”

Nor is this the worst of Mrs. Bramwell Booth’s offences against common decency. She calls the Hall of Science one of the most prominent “abodes of wickedness in London,” and a place where Charles Bradlaugh and his colleagues taught “impurity of a terrible kind.” It would be charity to suppose that she does not know what she is talking about, but it is difficult to entertain the excuse of ignorance, for the Christian world is well aware of the fact that the very worst libellers of the Hall of Science were recently prosecuted in a court of justice, and sentenced to pay damages and costs, and that they never so much as attempted to prove a single one of the vile accusations which they and their like had for many years been flinging at the Institution. We feel bound, therefore, to regard Mrs. Bramwell Booth as a deliberate and reckless slanderer; and we trust this revelation of her character, and of Salvation Army tactics, will prevent any more wealthy Agnostics from subscribing to a Social Scheme which is worked in the interest of the narrowest and bitterest sectarianism.

We have done for the moment with Mrs. Bramwell Booth, and we turn our attention to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes—a gentleman in the same line of business, and possessing the same sweet temper and profound regard for veracity. Mr. Hughes states in the *Methodist Times* that “some months ago” the Hall of Science was offered him “for mission purposes”—apparently by Mr. R. O. Smith’s solicitor at the time when he was feigning negotiations with the Freethought party. “The Secularists,” says Mr. Hughes, “were unable to bear the expense of Mr. Bradlaugh’s headquarters.” This is what he learnt on making “inquiries,” but it was an absolute untruth. The Hall of Science never belonged to Mr. Bradlaugh or the Secular party, nor did he ever pay a fixed rent for its occupation. Mr. Bradlaugh raised money (about £1,300) towards building the premises, but left the property entirely in the hands of Mr. Smith, who derived the principal part of his income from the profits of a proprietary club. And after Mr. Bradlaugh’s death the Hall was lost, not by any inability on the part of the National Secular Society to pay the rent then agreed upon for its use of the premises (for it paid Mr. Smith £250 a year), but by a difficulty in a time of commercial depression of raising £3,000 to purchase the place outright—a difficulty which was at length hopelessly accentuated by the insolvency of the leaseholder.

Mr. Hughes always takes care that the readers of the *Methodist Times* shall not be too well plied with facts. During the Atheist Shoemaker controversy, while we published his side of the case as well as our own in the *Freethinker*, he never allowed a syllable of our side to appear in his journal. And the following paragraph will show that he is still true to his old policy:—

“The utter collapse of the Secular Society at its headquarters is a striking illustration of the fact, which we have always asserted, that the popularity of the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was due to his humane and

democratic politics, and not in the least to his Atheism. If he had not been an Atheist, his influence would have been ten times greater. He was a genuine friend and a mighty champion of the poor. He was also the advocate of a number of noble enterprises which ought to have commanded the sympathy of the Christian Church. For these reasons he became a great power in the land, but when he passed away his power died with him, and the hall which was the scene of his operations for a quarter of a century has now fallen into the hands of the Salvation Army."

During the lifetime of Charles Bradlaugh this man never talked about his humane politics and his noble enterprises, and never called him a friend and champion of the poor. He waited till Charles Bradlaugh was dead, and then shed crocodile tears over his grave. Every word he utters in praise of Charles Bradlaugh is but the hypocritical prelude to sinister falsehoods about his party. Mr. Hughes knows very well that there is no "utter collapse of the Secular Society," at its headquarters or elsewhere. He cannot have forgotten how he was pestered all over the country, wherever he went, with copies of our exposure of his Atheist Shoemaker story. He knows that after the "collapse" the Secular Society went to the west-end of London and had lectures close beside the West London Mission at St. James's Hall. It is not impossible that he sees the *Freethinker* pretty regularly. In that case, he would have seen that, on leaving the Hall of Science, the Secular Society held meetings for several months at the much larger Foresters' Hall in the same locality, that the St. James's Hall lectures were not the only ones delivered in the West-end, and that the North London frequenters of the Hall of Science have set up a new Club and Institute for themselves. The President of the National Secular Society has now engaged a West-end Hall for regular Sunday evening lectures, to which other features of propaganda and organisation will doubtless be added. Altogether, the "collapse" is a mere piece of Christian imposture, and Secularists can afford to laugh at it, especially when they remember the success of the Secular forward movement in the provinces under the President's Lecture Scheme.

Mr. Hughes adds that the West London Mission has long occupied Mr. Bradlaugh's "headquarters in West London, Cleveland Hall." But the place was never his headquarters. He had no sort of control over it, or responsibility for it; and it was used by all sorts of persons, for all sorts of purposes, before it was engaged by the Wesleyans. Cleveland Hall was founded by a wealthy Owenite, and was alienated from its founder's "trust" objects through the infamous law which Christians uphold against "unbelievers." And with this "significant" fact we leave Mr. Ananias Hughes and Mrs. Sapphira Booth.

G. W. FOOTE.

VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU.*

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in his essay on *The Function of Criticism*, remarked that "the France of Voltaire and Rousseau told far more powerfully upon the mind of Europe than the France of the Revolution." In her recent book of *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau*, Mrs. Macdonald has taken as her object to display the thought and work of these philosophers in their relationship to "the modern spirit." She has brought to her task much study, and the insight which comes from sympathy; and her book is not simply supplementary, but in several points corrective, of the views put forward by Morley and others with regard to these great men. At the outset Mrs. Macdonald enters into a polemic with Matthew Arnold, and those others who speak of Voltaire as a mere destructive who failed to understand the religious problem. She says justly: "If the Voltairean movement served only a destructive purpose, and has handed down to us no inheritance of animating ideas, we are bound to the conclusion that the liberation of the human mind from supernatural terrors is not a 'spiritual' purpose, and that the establishment of the intellectual and moral rights of man is not an animating idea." Further,

Mrs. Macdonald contends Voltaire did, by declaring the views of dogma and those of reason to be irreconcilable, far more satisfactorily solve the religious problem than apostles of culture, who are for ever seeking to reconcile contradictions and unite the incompatible. Mrs. Macdonald further shows that the direct method of Voltaire has the justification of success. Against him was the organised and disciplined armies of dogmatism, supported by the King and Court; yet, with the sword of ridicule that kills, he became a terror to the party of terror, and it is with him and his little band of fellow-workers that the victory remains. "And it is they who, in fifty years, put the persecuting spirit to shame, and made the claims of supernatural faith take the second rank under the sovereign rights of humanity and the moral law." To the objection that Voltaire ridiculed not only fanatical cruelty, but the devotional feelings also, our authoress points out: "It was these devotional feelings that, by the zeal they inspired for the preservation of sacred illusions, made men forgetful of the claims of truth and justice, and indifferent to the sacredness of human life."

Mrs. Macdonald's book has the bust of Rousseau on the cover, and is far more largely devoted to the citizen of Geneva than to the patriarch of Ferney. She regards J. J. Rousseau, of whom she is preparing a complete biography, far more favorably, and, I think, on the whole more justly, than does Mr. Morley, who cannot forget that Rousseau was no evolutionist. Of course *The Social Contract* could not be written as it stands by any scientific sociologist of to-day; but, none the less, the fact remains that it, like the other works of Rousseau, called man back to forgotten truths, to nature, and to the facts of the human constitution. Mrs. Macdonald is doing a real service in calling attention to the merits of an author it has been too much the fashion to neglect, or to abuse as a mere sentimentalist. She says with truth that, if Voltaire asserted the claims of the intellect, Rousseau asserted those of the conscience and the heart. Much of his teaching is summed up in his phrase, *Hommes! Soyez humains: c'est votre premier devoir*. (It is the first duty of man to be humane.) This duty was as emphatically taught by Voltaire. Of the two, Mrs. Macdonald evidently most highly appreciates Rousseau. She says: "Voltaire was the soldier of the Modern Spirit; Rousseau was its prophet. Among men of science and of letters he is the religious teacher—the man who has the impassioned earnestness and fervor that belonged to a great moral reformer."

Of course some deductions must be made from a moral reformer, who fell out with nearly everyone with whom he came in contact. Rousseau, as Mrs. Macdonald remarks, never underwent the discipline that trains the average man in habits of self-control. He was a child of nature and circumstance, and it was this which enabled him to impinge so powerfully on the artificial society of France before the Revolution.

To me it seems that over-sensitiveness was bound to lead Rousseau into trouble. Exacting with his friends, he was ready, on the slightest suspicion, to regard them as enemies. Impulsive and tactless, he contrived not only to make enemies, but to quarrel with those who would and should have been his best friends. There was something feminine about Rousseau, and, perhaps, for this reason a woman is best able to estimate him aright. Mrs. Macdonald shows that Rousseau was, if very human, no unnatural monster such as depicted by Lamartine. In a chapter devoted to the subject she casts doubt upon the story that Rousseau's children were sent to l'Enfants Trouvés, or that they were ever born. She holds that Rousseau was probably deceived in this matter by Thérèse Levasseur and her mother. Whether we agree with this conclusion or not, it is certain that Mrs. Macdonald has brought to the consideration of the subject much investigation and insight. Personally, I heartily endorse her judgment that it is a critical blunder to concentrate one's attention upon his or any person's defects, so as to lose sight of their actual services. She remarks, with truth, that the benefits Rousseau conferred upon mankind and the triumphs that crowned his genius are the truly memorable features of his career.

Mrs. Macdonald has made extensive researches in the France of the eighteenth century, for writing the history of which the late James Cotter Morison formed considerable preparations. It was the beginning of the Age of Reason. To my mind, of the spiritual fathers of the modern era

* *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau*, by Frederika Macdonald, author of *The Iliad of the East*, *The Flower and the Spirit*, etc.; with portraits. (London: T. Fisher Unwin; 1895.)

Diderot was, in some respects, the greatest. More profound and thorough than either Voltaire or Rousseau, he largely buried his talents in the Encyclopædie. But he of late has been adequately recognised, while Rousseau has been comparatively neglected. Mrs. Macdonald's book, which is splendidly printed on thick paper, and hence looks somewhat more bulky than it really is, is eminently readable, and is indeed a study which cannot be overlooked by those concerned in these great men, and in the history of Freethought in Europe. It is a strong and brave work, and I shall look forward with interest to its sequel in *The Life of Rousseau*.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER VII.

THIRD STAGE—SECULARISM.

"Nothing is destroyed until it has been replaced."—MADAME DE STAEL.

SEEING this wise maxim in a paper by Auguste Comte, I asked my friend, William de Fonvielle (who was in communication with Comte), to learn for me the authorship of the phrase. Comte answered that it was the Emperor's (Napoleon III.). It first appeared, as I afterwards found, in the writings of Madame de Stael, and more fully expressed by her.

Self-regarding criticism, having discovered the insufficiency of theology for the guidance of man, next sought to ascertain what rules human reason may supply for the independent conduct of life, which is the object of Secularism. At first the term was taken to be a mask concealing sinister features—"a new name for an old thing"—or as a substitute term for "Scepticism" or "Atheism." If impressions were always knowledge, men would be wise without inquiry, and explanations would be unnecessary. The term Secularism was chosen to express the extension of Freethought to Ethics. Freethinkers commonly go no further than saying, "We search for Truth."* Secularists say we have found it—at least, so much as replaces the chief errors and uncertainties of theology.

Harriet Martineau, the most intrepid thinker among the women of her day, wrote to Lloyd Garrison a letter (inserted in the *Liberator*, 1853) approving "the term Secularism as including a large number of persons who are not Atheists, and uniting them for action, which has Secularism for its object. By the adoption of the new term a vast amount of prejudice is got rid of." At length it was seen that the "new term" designated a new conception. Secularism is a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable. Its essential principles are three:—

1. The improvement of this life by material means.
2. That science is the available† Providence of man.
3. That it is good to do good. Whether there be other good or not, the good of the present life is good, and it is good to seek that good.

Individual good attained by methods conducive to the good of others is the highest aim of man, whether regard be had to human welfare in this life or personal fitness for another. Precedence is, therefore, given to the duties of this life.

Being asked to send to the International Congress of Liberal thinkers (1886) an account of the tenets of the English party known as Secularists, I gave the following explanation of them:—

The Secular is that the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life. The ground common to all self-determined thinkers is that of independency of opinion, known as Freethought, which, though but an impulse of

* M. Aurelius Antoninus said: "I seek the truth, by which no man was ever injured." It would be true had he said mankind. Men are continually injured by the truth, or how do martyrs come, or why do we honor them?

† This phrase was a suggestion of my friend, the Rev. Dr. Henry Crosskey, about 1854. I afterwards used the word "available," which does not deny, nor challenge, nor affirm the belief in a theological Providence by others, who, therefore, are not incited to assail the effectual proposition that material resources are an available Providence where a spiritual Providence is inactive.

intellectual courage in the search for truth, or an impulse of aggression against hurtful or irritating error, or the caprice of a restless mind, is to be encouraged. It is necessary to promote independent thought—whatever its manner of manifestation—since there can be no progress without it. A Secularist is intended to be a reasoner—that is, as Coleridge defined him, one who inquires what a thing is, and not only what it is, but *why* it is what it is. One of the two great forces of opinion created in this age is what is known as Atheism,* which deprives superstition of its standing ground, and compels Theism to reason for its existence. The other force is Materialism, which shows the physical consequences of error, supplying, as it were, beacon lights to morality.

Though respecting the right of the Atheist and Theist to their theories of the origin of nature, the Secularist regards them as belonging to the debateable ground of speculation. Secularism neither asks nor gives any opinion upon them, confining itself to the entirely independent field of study—the order of the universe. Neither asserting nor denying Theism or a future life, having no sufficient reason to give if called upon, the fact remains that material influences exist, vast and available for good, as men have the will and wit to employ them.

Whatever may be the value of metaphysical or theological theories of morals, utility in conduct is a daily test of common sense, and is capable of deciding intelligently more questions of practical duty than any other rule. Considerations which pertain to the general welfare operate without the machinery of theological creeds, and over masses of men in every land, where Christian incentives are alien or unregarded.

CHAPTER VIII.

THREE PRINCIPLES VINDICATED.

"Be wisely worldly; but not worldly wise."—FRANCIS QUARLES.

1. *Of Material Means as Conditions of Welfare in this World.*—Theology works by "spiritual" means. Christians and Secularists both intend raising the character of the people, but their methods are much different. Christians are now beginning to employ material agencies for the elevation of life, which science, and not theology, has brought under their notice. But the Christian does not trust these agencies; the Secularist does, and in his mind the secular is sacred. Spiritual means can never be depended upon for food, raiment, art, or national defence.

The Archbishop of York (Dr. Magee), a clear-headed and candid prelate, surprised his contemporaries (at the Diocesan Conference, Leicester, October 19, 1889) by declaring that "Christianity made no claim to re-arrange the economic relations of man in the State or in society. He hoped he would be understood when he said plainly that it was his firm belief that any Christian State carrying out, in all its relations, the Sermon on the Mount could not exist for a week. It was perfectly clear that a State could not continue to exist upon what were commonly called 'Christian' principles."

From the first, Secularism had based its claims to be regarded on the fact that only the rich could afford to be Christians, and the poor must look to other principles for deliverance. Material means are those which are calculable, which are under the control and command of man, and can be tested by human experience. No definition of Secularism shows its distinctiveness which omits to specify *material* means as its method of procedure. But for the theological blasphemy of nature representing it as the unintelligent tool of God, the secular would have ennobled common life long ago. Sir Godfrey Kneller said he "never looked on a bad picture but he carried away in his mind a dirty tint." Secularism would efface the dirty tints of life which Christianity has prayed over, but not removed.

2. *Of the Providence of Science.*—Men are limited in power, and are oft in peril, and those who are taught to trust to supernatural aid are betrayed to their own destruction. We are told we should work as though there were no help in heaven, and pray as though there were no help in ourselves. Since, however, praying saves no ship, arrests no disease, and does not pay the tax-gatherer, it is better to work at once and without the digression of sinking prayer-buckets into empty wells, and spending life in drawing nothing up.

* Huxley's term, Agnosticism, implies a different thing—unknowingness without denial.

The word illuminating secular life is *self-help*. The Secularist vexes not the ear of heaven by mendicant supplications. His is the only religion that gives heaven no trouble.

3. *Of Goodness as Fitness for this World or Another.*—Goodness is the service of others with a view to their advantage. There is no higher human merit. Human welfare is the sanction of morality. The measure of a good action is its conduciveness to progress. The utilitarian test of generous rightness in motive may be open to objection—there is no test which is not; but the utilitarian rule is one comprehensible by every mind. It is the only rule which makes knowledge necessary, and becomes more luminous as knowledge increases. A fool may be a believer,* but not a utilitarian, who seeks his ground of action in the largest field of relevant facts his mind is able to survey. Utility in morals is measuring the good of one by its agreement with the good of many. Large ideas are when a man measures the good of his parish by the good of the town; the good of the town by the good of the county; the good of the county by the good of the country; the good of the country by the good of the continent; the good of the continent by the cosmopolitanism of the world.

Truth and solicitude for the social welfare of others are the proper concern of a soul worth saving. Only minds with goodness in them have the desert of future existence. Minds without veracity and generosity die. The elements of death are in the selfish already. They could not live in a better world if they were admitted. In a noble passage in his sermon on "Citizenship," the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke said:—

"There are thousands of my fellow citizens, men and women and children, who are living in conditions in which they have no true means of becoming healthy in body, trained in mind, or comforted by beauty. Life is as hard for them as it is easy for me. I cannot help them by giving them money one by one, but I can help them by making the condition of their life easier by a good government of the city in which they live. And even if the charge on my property for this purpose increases for a time, year by year, till the work is done, that charge I will gladly pay. It shall be my ethics, my religion, my patriotism, my citizenship, to do it."†

The great preacher whose words are here cited, like Theodore Parker (the Jupiter of the pulpit in his day, as Wendell Phillips described him to me), is not a Secularist; but he expresses here the religion of the Secularist, if such a person can be supposed to have a religion.

A theological creed which the base may hold—and usually do—has none of the merit of deeds of service to humanity, which only the good intentionally perform. Conscience is the sense of right with regard to others; it is a sense of duty towards others, which tells us that we should do justice to them; and if not able to do it individually, to endeavor to get it done by others. At St. Peter's Gate there can be no passport so safe as this. He was not far wrong who, when asked where heaven lay, answered, "On the other side of a good action."

If, as Dr. James Martineau says, "there is a thought of God in the thing that is true, and a will of God in that which is right," Secularism, caring for truth and duty, cannot be far wrong. Thus it has a reasonable regard for the contingencies of another life, should it supervene. Reasoned opinions rely for justification upon intelligent conviction and a well-informed sincerity. The Secularist is without presumption of an infallible creed, is without the timorous indefiniteness of a creedless believer. He does not disown a creed because theologians have promulgated Jew-bound, unalterable articles of faith. The Secularist has a creed as definite as science and as flexible as progress, increasing as the horizon of truth is enlarged. His creed is a confession of his belief. There is more unity of opinion among self-thinkers than is supposed. They all maintain the necessity of independent opinion, for they all exercise it. They all believe in the moral rightfulness of independent thought, or they are guilty for propagating it. They all agree as to the right of publishing well-considered thought, otherwise thinking would be of little use. They all approve of free criticism, for there could be no reliance on thought which did not use or could

nor bear that. All agree as to the equal action of opinion without which opinion would be fruitless and action a monopoly. All agree that truth is the object of Free-thought, for many have died to gain it. All agree that scrutiny is the pathway to truth, for they have all passed along it. They all attach importance to the good of this life, teaching this as the first service to humanity. All are of one opinion as to the efficacy of material means in promoting human improvement, for they alone are distinguished by vindicating their use. All hold that morals are effectively commended by reason, for all self-thinkers have taught so. All believe that God, if he exists, is the God of the honest, and that he respects conscience more than creeds, for all Freethinkers have died in this faith. Independent thinkers, from Socrates to Huxley and Herbert Spencer,* have all agreed—

In the necessity of Free-thought.
In the rightfulness of it.
In the adequacy of it.
In the considerate publicity of it.
In the fair criticism of it.
In the equal action of conviction.
In the recognition of this life, and
In the material control of it.

The Secularist, like Karpos the gardener, may say of his creed: "Its points are few and simple. They are: to be a good citizen, a good husband, a good father, and a good workman." "I go no further," said Karpos, "but pray God to take it all in good part, and have mercy on my soul."†

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTIAN CRITICISM.

SECULARISTS are always desirous to have their views criticised by intelligent Christian exponents, for such criticism affords us an excellent opportunity to explain what our opinions are, and, at the same time, to correct any misapprehension that may exist in the theological mind as to our attitude towards the prevailing religious faiths. In order, however, for criticism to be useful, those who criticise should be careful to understand the subjects they deal with. Unfortunately, Christian advocates too frequently misrepresent Secular teachings, imputing to us views we do not entertain, and in many instances stating the very opposite of what our principles really are. Probably these errors, upon the part of Christian critics, arise from the fact that they seldom thoroughly acquaint themselves with the real nature of the teachings they assail. Hence they mislead their hearers, or readers, with conclusions drawn from erroneous conceptions.

A case of this kind happened a few weeks since, in connection with my recent lecture at Stanley, in the county of Durham. The *Consett Chronicle*, of April 17, gives a long and fairly accurate report of my lecture; but the editor, ignoring what I said as reported in his own paper, writes two leading articles, one upon the subject of the lecture, "Does Death End All?" and another upon "Secularism"; and in both of these articles he evinces a sad lack of knowledge upon the teachings he criticises. For instance, he charges Secularists with positively denying a future existence, and he also alleges that I entertain a hope that "there will not be a future life." Both statements are the very opposite of the truth. In my lecture I emphatically urged that Secularists do not deny a future life, inasmuch as it would be illogical for them to do so, for the reason that they confess they know nothing of such a life. It does not follow that a person should deny that which he does not believe. The Secular position is, that there is not sufficient evidence to justify the dogmatic assertion, either that there is, or is not, a life beyond the grave. Knowing only of one existence, Secularists content themselves therewith, feeling assured that the best credential to secure any possible immortality is the wise and intellectual use of

* The *Guardian* told us about 1887 that the Bishop of Exeter confirmed five idiots.

† Preached in reference to the London County Council elections, March, 1892.

* See *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of all Ages and Nations*, by J. M. Wheeler, and *Four Hundred Years of Free-thought* (from Columbus to Ingersoll), by Samuel Porter Putnam, containing upwards of 1,000 biographies.

† Dialogue between Karpos the gardener and Bashiew Tucton, by Voltaire.

the life we now have. They further allege that, to the man who is sincere and true to his conscience through life, "hereafter" has no terrors. The man who has lived well, we allege, has made the best preparation to die well, and he will find that the principles which supported him in health can sustain him in sickness. When the last grand scene arrives, the Secularist, having done his duty, lies down quietly to rest, and sleeps the long sleep from which, so far as he *knows*, there is no waking. Then his work is done, and, if it has been done well, there is nothing to fear either in this or in any other life. Such are the views of Secularists as to death, and, holding such views, they can die without fear, as they have lived without hypocrisy.

I have never expressed a "hope that there will not be a future life." My desire upon that point must depend entirely upon what the supposed future existence really is. The beliefs upon this subject have been so varied and contradictory that they appear to me to be simply the result of imagination. Persons invariably picture their heaven in accordance with the creed or belief in which they have been trained. Thus we find that the Indian thinks that his heaven will be an "everlasting hunting-ground," where he will have unlimited sport in chasing wild animals. The African supposes heaven to be a locality where he can have plenty of food, a comfortable home, and a happy circle of friends. The Asiatic races entertain the idea that heaven is to be remarkable for the presence of charming young ladies, which certainly would be preferable to the Christian's heaven, for that is said to be the abode of "the souls of those who had been slain," and a kind of receptacle for all sorts of bad characters, including criminals and oppressors, men who were considered too immoral to live on earth. If the New Testament be true, the brave, the noble, and the patriotic are oftentimes excluded from the portals of the celestial city. The passports required for admission there are faith and submission. A permanent sojourn in a place which rejects the purest and best of our race cannot be desired by any but moral invalids and intellectual mendicants. Personally, I have no objection to "a life beyond the grave," provided it be one worth having. If it should be an abode of justice, freedom, and happiness; if it be free from pain, sorrow, and cruelty; if we can share the company, and participate in the joys, of the dear ones whom on earth we loved; if we can have the society of the intellectually great and the morally pure; if there will be no sights of agony to blanch the cheek, and no torture to rend the heart, then to me there would be no objection to such a life. But, candidly, I see no grounds for entertaining a hope that such a life is in store for us; therefore, as Mr. Hugh O. Pentecost has so well said, "The Freethinker looks at death just as it is, so far as we know anything about it—the end of life. He does not hope nor expect to live after death. He admits that he may, just as there may be a planet in which water runs uphill. He therefore maps out his life with absolutely no reference to alleged heavens or hells, or to any kind of spirit world. He goes through this world seeking his own welfare, and knowing, from the open book of history and his own experience, that he can promote his own welfare only by promoting the welfare of every other man, woman, and child in the world."

The editor argues in favor of a future life, from the fact that therein compensation is to be afforded for the evils endured during our present existence. He exclaims: "How many wrongs are there here which are never righted? Is there to be no compensation for the anguish and suffering endured by millions, into whose darkened lives no glint of light ever comes? If this be so, then one is driven to the inevitable conclusion that to all such life is not, and cannot be, worth living." This notion of future compensation is pure assumption, without the slightest evidence of justification. It assumes that in the "next world" we shall have the same passions and the same susceptibilities as we possess here. But this is not orthodox teaching, any more than it accords with the facts pertaining to life and death. Moreover, it may be asked, Why have we wrongs here that cannot be "righted"? A good God ought to have made better arrangements. The fact is, nothing in any other world could possibly compensate for the misery and privations which are endured by thousands of unfortunate creatures in this life. It is an old saying that "prevention is better than cure"; it certainly would be in this case, for to torture people here, in order to give them the pleasure imparted

by the cessation of the agony in some other existence, is by no means humane and just.

The editor takes exception to my statement that, because a person has the "longing" for a future life, it does not necessarily follow that he will ever realise such "longing." But I put a further question—namely, Is it possible to "long" for that of which nothing is known? I am asked, "Whence does such an instinct arise?" So far as the instinct is a reality, it can easily be accounted for. Speaking of the origin of the belief in a future life, Professor Graham observes: "A strange and extravagant fancy that arose one day in the breast of one more aspiring than the rest became soon afterwards a wish; the wish became a fixed idea, that drew around itself vain and spurious arguments in its favor; and at length the fancy, the wish, the idea, was erected into an established doctrine of belief. Such, in sum, is the natural history of the famous dogma of a future life. Not by any means, however, was it a primitive and universal belief of all nations. Arising probably at first with the Egyptians, it was only after a long time taken up by the Jews, then or possibly earlier by the Greeks, with whom, however, the life held out, thin and unsubstantial even at best, was far from being desirable. It was only in the Christian and Mohammedan religions that the notion of a future and an eternal life was fully developed, and that the doctrine was erected into a central and an essential article of belief" (*The Creed of Science*, p. 160).

We submit that the instinctive love of life found in man is sufficient to explain the desire for its continuance. And, be it observed, this alleged desire is really not for another life, but for a perpetuation of the one we now have. No doubt there is some connection between desires and their realisation in reference to things that are attainable, for the very desire may be a factor in the sum of the causes that enable us to realise our ideals. But the mere fact of having the desire is no evidence that its realisation will follow. A desire for food and comfort is very general, but many are destitute of both. The longing that all members of the human family should be equally well off is extensive, but such a state of things does not exist. Most of us are always longing for a higher degree of happiness than we ever experience. We must not, in reasoning, take refuge in incongruities. Those who argue that without an endless future this life is not worth living must regard the present existence as being exceedingly defective. Why, then, should its continuation be desired? If it is said that in another world there will be a change for the better, we ask, Where is the proof that any improvement will take place? It is another instance that the wish is father to the thought. Endless existence and interminable motion may be laws of thought which it is impossible to banish from our minds, although we are unable to conceive of an infinite past, which is involved in the statement. But it is otherwise with the *forms* of existence that possess life; these can be conceived of as coming to an end. Intense heat or intense cold may terminate all living things in a brief space of time. The truth is that it is only dreamers who contend that any part of the compound being called man will

flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

BRUNSWICK HALL, GLASGOW, MAY 24, 1896.

AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.
Notice of Motion by the Glasgow Branch, Finsbury Branch, and Finsbury Park Branch: "That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President for 1896-7."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.
(a) The following are nominated by the Executive

for re-election : Dr. T. R. Allinson, G. Anderson, D. Baker, E. Bater, N. B. Billany, J. E. Brumage, Dr. L. Büchner, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, J. F. Dewar, R. Forder, J. P. Gilmour, S. Hartmann, W. Heaford, P. A. Le Lubez, A. B. Moss, T. Parris, S. M. Peacock, W. Pratt, S. P. Putnam, J. H. Ridgway, V. Roger, J. Samson, Dr. E. Schlaeger, J. Symes, E. Truelove, J. Umpleby, Miss E. M. Vance, C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler.

(b) The following are nominated by the Executive for election : John Grange (Bradford), T. Gorniot (North-West London), F. Schaller (West London), H. J. Stace (Westminster), S. R. Thompson (Manchester, late Wood Green), G. J. Warren (East London).

7. Election of Honorary Secretary.
Motion by Executive : "That Mr. Robert Forder be re-elected Honorary Secretary."
8. Election of Auditors.
9. Letter from Mr. S. Putnam, President of the American Secular Union.
10. Motion by Birmingham Branch *re* Presidency :—
"That the position of President of the N.S.S. shall not be held by one person more than three years in succession, and that two years at least shall elapse from such term of office before he become again eligible for election."
11. Motion by Birmingham Branch :—
"That the first Sunday in November in each year be fixed as a special day on which all Branches shall make their annual collection for the Benevolent Fund."
12. Motion by Mr. Charles Watts :—
"That, in the interest of vigor and continuity of action, it is advisable that, without any interference with the autonomy of the Branches, the Central Executive, which transacts all general business, should consist of a definite number of persons well known to the party at large ; that these persons should be the President and Vice-Presidents elected yearly at the annual Conference ; and that such Vice-Presidents as, by reason of distance, cannot often attend the Executive meetings should be communicated with in regard to any matters of exceptional importance."
13. Motion by Mr. G. J. Warren (East London) :—
"That the Organisation Committee be not re-appointed."
14. Motion by the South Shields Branch :—
"That the Conference consider the possibility of arranging for a special lecturer permanently stationed in the North."
15. Statement by Mr. G. W. Foote *re* his Lecture Scheme.
16. Motion by the Islington Branch :—
"That the President be asked to allow his Lecture Scheme to be continued in future under the control of the National Secular Society."
17. Motion by Mr. G. J. Warren :—
"That this Conference urges Branches to register the names and addresses of all Secularists residing in their respective districts (who are not members of the Society) for the purposes of organisation and united effort at School Board and other elections."
18. Motion by Mr. G. W. Foote :—
(a) Sketch of a plan for defeating the Blasphemy Laws as affecting the legal status of Secular Societies.
(b) *Resolution* : "That as there seems no immediate probability of any alteration in the law by which Secular Societies are denied the common right to hold property and receive gifts and legacies, and as the National Secular Society continues to suffer very great financial loss in consequence, it is necessary that some indirect means be taken whereby property could, with reasonable security, be devoted to the Society's objects ; and to this end the Conference endorses the plan just sketched out, and authorises the President, with what assistance he may require from the Executive, to carry the said plan into realisation with the utmost possible dispatch."
19. Motion by Mr. G. W. Foote :—
"That the opinion of this Conference be taken with respect to the more important parts of the new Education Bill, and that the Executive be desired to issue a Manifesto immediately on the lines agreed to."

The morning sitting of the Conference will open at 10.30 and close at 12.30. The afternoon sitting at 2.30, closing at 4.30, unless extended by resolution. Only members of the National Secular Society can speak or vote.

A public meeting will be held in the evening, at seven o'clock, in the Grand Hall, Waterloo Rooms, Waterloo-street. Addresses will be delivered by Messrs. G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, C. Cohen, R. Forder, J. P. Gilmour, and other gentlemen.

ACID DROPS.

JOHN BURNS said that Chicago was a pocket edition of Hell. It is natural, therefore, that the Chicago Christians should stand up for the large copy edition. A Presbyterian Church there recently engaged a young minister, the Rev. F. B. Vrooman, whose orthodoxy was somewhat under suspicion. He was summoned before the Presbytery, and asked, "What is the meaning of hell?" His reply was smart : "Sin is hell, and hell is sin." But the definition was not deemed satisfactory, and the young minister is being pursued for "heresy." Hell is safe yet—at any rate in Chicago.

Coroner Wyatt, of Newington, is really too sensitive for the common life of this planet, and will never be happy till he is in heaven. During a recent inquest in his court the mother of a dead child said that she picked it up and exclaimed to her husband, "Oh, my God, Charlie, the baby's dead!" Whereupon the Coroner remarked : "We don't want so much blasphemy, if you please. Let me tell you that, if you make use of such blasphemous expressions outside, it won't do in a coroner's court."

Coroner Wyatt forgets that the poor mother's exclamation is a classical quotation from Scripture. We don't know what Jesus Christ would have ejaculated if he had lost a baby, but when he came to die himself he cried : "My God, my God." According to Coroner Wyatt, this is a blasphemous expression. Jesus Christ would soon be called to order in Coroner Wyatt's court.

When Mlimo, the Matabele god, was said to have prophesied that all the horses in Bulawayo should be killed, and a spy was afterwards caught who had a special mission to hamstring the horses, everybody can see that the god was brought in to give confidence to the Matabele. But no one must suspect that any craft of this kind went on in the days of the Israelites.

The Matabele god further promised to turn the enemy's bullets into water, another piece of craft to give confidence in war, for which the doctrine of immortality was, if not devised, at least much utilised. But here Mlimo's priest overshot himself. The Matabele find bullets do not turn to water, and threaten to punish the god in consequence.

Hall Caine, the novelist, thinks he knows his Bible as few literary men know it ; at least he says so in *McClure's Magazine*—an American publication. "There is no book in the world like it," says Mr. Caine, and we agree with him. The Koran, for instance, is a clean book in comparison with the Bible. There is dirt enough in the Bible to call in the sanitary inspector—if it were only found in some other volume. However, that is not what Mr. Caine means. "The finest novels ever written," he says, "fall far short in interest of any one of the stories it tells." This is the most modest utterance we ever saw attributed to Mr. Caine. There is something in the world better than his own novels. But a mere man can hardly be expected to compete with God Almighty.

John Smith applied at the local magistrate's court for warrants against a Salvation Army lieutenant and another person, whom he charged with having beaten and kicked him at the Salvation Army Shelter in Blackfriars-road, and afterwards flinging him out on the pavement, where a police inspector found him lying unconscious. The warrants were granted. At the same court, on the same day, Peter Glyn and Charles Davis, officers at the same Shelter, were charged with kicking Arthur Sheppard and breaking three of his ribs. This, again, was a case of "chucking-out." Both prisoners were remanded on bail. Glyn exclaimed, "Glory be to God, the General must see us out of this." Perhaps the "General" had better see Arthur Sheppard out of the trouble of three broken ribs.

According to an article in *Hurper's Weekly*, to get to the New York Chinese Joss House you have to go through a shop and a Chinese restaurant. A large screen in the centre of the floor faces the altar, which is truly gorgeous in its color and glitter, its peacock feathers and candles. There are no congregational services in the temple ; each individual pays for his own candle and incense, and conducts his own worship, or pays the small fee to the soothsayer, and has his probable luck in any contemplated undertaking foretold.

The bubonic plague is not extinct in China, and in our colony of Hong Kong 75 deaths were reported in one week. Prayer and Providence do not affect those latitudes.

So excellent are providential arrangements that in one place floods cause loss of life, while in another drought destroys all the crops. This is at present the case in Spain.

The scenes in the country villages are described as piteous. In some hamlets the supply of drinking water has completely failed, and the people flock to the railway stations, where they await the arrival of the trains and implore the passengers to give them a drop of water.

Rain is wanted badly in England, but the sky-pilots are too "fly" to trouble Providence about the matter. Of course they still teach the efficacy of prayer, but they don't like putting it to the test too frequently. The sky-pilots in Spain, however, where rain is wanted even worse than it is in England, are not so squeamish. Eight hundred priests, with a multitude of members of religious congregations, paraded the streets of Madrid on Monday, carrying lighted tapers, and headed by the body of St. Isidore, the patron saint of the city. It is not yet reported that rain has fallen. It will fall some day, and when it *does* fall it will, of course, have been brought down by the old bones of St. Isidore.

Colonel Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga, was a famous infidel in his day, and he wrote a book entitled *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*. Talmage has just been trotting out an old lie about him to the effect that he told a dying daughter to follow her mother's religion, and not his own views.

Dr. W. A. Croffut, of Washington, wrote to Dr. Talmage, asking his authority, and citing Major-General Hitchcock, a grandson of Ethan Allen, who wrote: "I had often heard my mother speak of the death of that sister, and remembered having heard her say that she attended her in her last moments, and I desired to know whether there was any foundation for the story. My mother told me on two occasions that there was none whatever. I regard the story, therefore, as a pure invention in behalf of certain opinions to which my grandfather was supposed to be unfriendly."

Dr. Croffut added: "If you need a picturesque illustration for a sermon, I will give you one concerning this same man—Ethan Allen; a story which is believed by his relatives to be true. The minister of the church he (sometimes) attended—a Presbyterian—preached one Sunday on 'Predestination,' and, illustrating that sublime dogma, he said: 'How many will be snatched from everlasting fire? Probably not one in a thousand! Probably not one in ten thousand! Possibly not one in a million!' Whereat Ethan Allen smote the desk in front of him with his fist, and loudly exclaimed: 'I wouldn't give a damn for a ticket in that lottery!'"

One would think this was sufficient. But not so for the Rev. T. de Witt, who answered as follows: "Dear Mr. Croffut,—Yours received, and I have only time now to say if the distinguished American did, as you say, so lose his temper in church as to strike the desk in front of him, and use profane language, I have no further faith in him. If your impression of what he did on that occasion is accurate (and I know you believe it to be accurate), he was a vulgar and blasphemous man, and any contradiction that he made of what he said on another occasion would have no weight with me."

The grand jury at Pawnee, Oklahoma, indicted the Rev. C. L. Berry, the leading Presbyterian clergyman of that territory, for receiving money in a bank of which he is the owner when it was in a failing condition; and so great was the indignation of the people against him that he barely escaped lynching by them.

This is what Mara Satsunachyra, a Brahmin member of the School of Philosophy at Madras, says of missions: "Our friends have been picturing to you Christianity standing with the Bible in one hand, and the wizard's wand of civilisation in the other; but there is another side, and that is the goddess of civilisation with a bottle of rum in her hand! O, that the English had never set foot in India! O, that we had never seen a Western face! O, that we had never tasted the bitter sweets of your civilisation, rather than she make us a nation of drunkards and brutes!"

In his speech at the Press Club, Mr. John Morley told how Mr. W. T. Stead's registered telegraph address was "Vatican." Mr. Morley had "ventured to suggest that this was a little too high." The only reason, however, why the editor in question put up with any vicegerency, and did not adopt a yet higher address, was—so the story went—that it was already appropriated, or that the postal authorities declined to accept it.

The Rev. Dr. Norman Walker stated to the English Presbyterian Synod that, although Scotland was becoming deplorably lax in its Sabbath observance, it is still not quite so bad as England, where a vicar recently allowed the hour of divine service to be altered for the convenience of golf-

players. This, according to Mr. Walker, was in a village near London.

The Methodists have declined in the number of their memberships, and the Baptists have fallen off in the number of their baptisms. There is no information as to whether the Church, the Salvation Army, or Freethought is profiting by the decline of the dissidence of Dissent.

It seems that no facts revealed by the Methodist census have occasioned deeper mortification than the statistics in connection with the West London Mission. A host of money has been subscribed from all parts to convert the West-enders, but the "forward" movement does not advance. And now it is said the audiences do not represent the West-end at all, but are drawn from all parts, attracted by the orchestra and discourses on the topics of the day.

A fine wolf in sheep's clothing is the Rev. Alfred Baker Winnifurth, curate of Dalwood, Devonshire, the co-respondent in a recent divorce case. This man of God had the impudence to write to the husband with whose wife he had committed adultery, offering "to act as arbitrator or mediator between Rose and you." He went into the witness-box and swore that he had never even kissed the respondent. But the evidence was clear, and, although Mr. Justice Barnes told the jury that the case was very serious for the co-respondent, as he could be turned from his living within twenty-one days of the divorce being made absolute, they found that he had been guilty of adultery, and a *decree nisi*, with costs, was granted.

The Rev. John Knox Brown, of Langbank, near Port Glasgow, died suddenly after purchasing prussic acid, as he alleged, to destroy a dog. On the previous Sunday he did not officiate, and the situation was considered at a special meeting of the Presbytery.

George Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*, says he was "betrayed" by a recommendation in the London *Freethinker* into trying to read a novel by George Meredith. "I never finished it," he says, "as it is not written in the language of sense." When we meet George Macdonald in America we shall have to ask him which novel it was. Meanwhile, we venture to remind him that the involution of the passage quoted from *Sandra Belloni* could easily be matched from Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. We will undertake to show scores of beautiful passages in Meredith, and some from that very same novel, as forthright and limpid as a hillside stream.

George Meredith and Thomas Carlyle are classed together by our Transatlantic friend as "literary mountebanks"—or rather he quotes this description of them, with implied approval, from Edgar Fawcett, who makes up a trinity by including Whitman. But surely, friend George, this is playing right down to the groundlings. Whitman is certainly apt to be amorphous in his poems, but his form is often excellent, although he dispenses with "dulcet rhymes." And in his prose—notably in *Democratic Vistas*, and still more notably in the original Preface to *Leaves of Grass*—there are whole pages made by beauty and simplicity as well as power.

Journalists are all under a temptation to belittle great original writers. Writing themselves for hasty readers, they too frequently come to regard that style as natural which the reader can follow with his mind as rapidly as his eye glances along the lines. But this style is *not* natural. It leaves no room for originality, or even for idiosyncrasy. A Dutch canal going straight through flat and well-ordered country is, after all, not so natural, and is certainly not so satisfying to eye and imagination, as a river rushing down mountains, coursing through rocky gullies, or flowing calmly in broad-curved channels past forests and pastures and cornfields, everywhere taking some hue and character from its surroundings, and displaying all moods because of the length and variety of its career.

George Meredith's reputation has not been suddenly acquired. He has been writing for forty years, and for thirty of them he was neglected by the "great stupid public," as Thackeray called it. His admirers were a select few, and they gradually made him respected by a wider circle. Now his books are fairly well sold, and, we hope, fairly well read. But the long neglect did certainly develop unduly the more subtle, fantastic, and allusive elements of his literary character. Nor is this unknown to George Meredith himself. He has anticipated his critics on this point. Having played to empty benches so long (to use his own metaphor), he has caught too much the trick of listening to his own voice. But let not the complaint be preferred too vehemently by those who left the benches empty when they might have been sitting there, to their own profit and to his.

The assassination of the Shah of Persia recalls attention

to the Bab sect, to whom it was said the "removal" was due. The account of this new religion and its analogues to Christianity was given in our columns a year ago.

It appears that the discontent of the Babists in Persia is due to the fact that the Shah would not allow them to establish their religion, which would have come into collision with the existing faith. They have, therefore, been forced to underground methods. One of their number made an attempt on the late Shah's life as far back as 1852.

The present year is the centennial of the so-called "prodigies of the Madonna," which are said to have occurred in various churches throughout Italy in 1796, when under apprehension of Republican invasion. Many pictures of Mary in various churches are said to have winked winks as a warning of the coming occupation of Rome and the captivity of Pope Pius VI. Twenty-six of these prodigies were judicially examined and solemnly attested shortly after their alleged occurrence—a course that was not taken with regard to the alleged prodigies of the New Testament.

The *Church Times* says Calvin held a view of the Real Presence which amounts to a real absence. He taught that there was no presence of Christ's body and blood but in power and efficacy. This is sometimes described as the bank-note theory. A bank-note may be virtually worth five sovereigns, but it stands not for their presence, but their absence. The *Church Times*, of course, goes in for the absurdity of the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, for that implies the transmogrifying power of the priest. Besides, a mystery always serves the turn of a mystery-man.

The *Church Times* (May 1) says: "Just in those parts of South Wales where Dissent is strongest, immorality and crime of a peculiarly revolting kind are rampant." It adds: "The worst feature of the case is that in these districts a far larger proportion of the people than in any similar district in England attend a place of worship."

The Catholics are ever on the alert for a chance, and the outbreak of small-pox at Gloucester has been followed by a large sale of camphorated tar made up in the form of a cross. This is supposed to bring increased efficacy by believers of all kinds who have a strong remnant of fetishism in them.

One of the most brilliant of the May Meetings was that of the Lord's Day Observance Society. Three Scotch M.P.'s were present to deplore the Sunday opening of museums. This was not the worst, said Mr. J. A. Campbell, M.P., for in the West-end Clubs musical performances, and even comic sketches, were given on the Sabbath. Mr. W. Johnston, M.P., informed the world that the downfall of the Stuart dynasty was the result of the desecration of the Sabbath.

In the *Nineteenth Century*, for May, Lord Halifax writes on his pet subject, "The Re-union of Christendom." He thinks the Anglican Church is quite prepared to swallow the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Why not? The Immaculate Conception of Jesus implies that of Mary, that of her mother, St. Anne, the grandmother of the Eternal God, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Dr. Bruce gives an illustration of providential design in the tseke fly. This little insect is so constructed that a bite from it is invariably fatal to a horse, ass, or dog, so that the district in Africa where it is found is impassable. When a horse is stung, its blood soon becomes choked with living infusoria, to the extent of many millions to a thimbleful. He hath made all things for the greatest happiness of the greatest number!

The most sickening feature of the Church comments on the Education Bill is the cant about the rights of the parents to have their children taught their religion. One would fancy the parents of England had unanimously been petitioning Parliament to give their children stronger doses of theology, or that it was no part of a parent's business to see to the matter of their children's religion. As a matter of fact, the cry about parents' rights is a false issue to ensure the right of the priest to inculcate his own authority.

A writer in the *British Weekly* gives the following specimen of what the clericals wish taught to the young. At a children's service the curate said: "In a few minutes you will see a little baby brought into church to be baptised. When it comes it is a child of the Devil; you will see me baptise it; and when it goes out it will be a child of God."

Dr. Joseph Parker says in the *Times* (May 4) that the only weapon wherewith to fight the Government Education Bill is anti-State Churchism pure and simple. "Nonconformity in England," he says, "is degraded and paralysed when its central principle is ignored or tampered with." Well, Nonconformity is degraded and paralysed, and there is

little hope that it will recover its principles under the leadership of men like Mr. Hugh Price Hughes.

The West London Mission made a great boast of taking Cleveland Hall. It appears, however, from the statement of income and expenditure that there was a deficit of £291 10s. 9½d. for 1895.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, giving her personal experiences in the *Journal of Hygiene*, says: "The only drawback to my complete health and happiness when a child was fear of the Devil, especially at night. He was an ever-present reality, whom I was told I could not see because he always kept himself exactly behind me, and, however quickly I might turn, I never could catch even a glimpse of his shadow. People who teach children such superstitions little dream of the positive injury they are doing to their mental and physical condition."

These fears, Mrs. Stanton remarks, were intensified under the preaching of the revivalist, Finney, and "in a measure marred my happiness and crippled my development, until I arrived at the age of seventeen years. I then read Combe's *Moral Philosophy*, and his *Constitution of Man*, and discussed the broad principles laid down in those volumes with a gentleman of liberal thought, and soon threw off all the old theological superstitions that had so long shadowed my life. I then struck the name of Milton's giant from the list of my acquaintances, and with long walks and rides on horseback I finally recovered the normal physical and moral tone of my being. Health and happiness are impossible where one is hedged about with undue restraints and fears of the undefined and unknown."

The Unitarian *Christian Register* says that the question, "Why did God create the Devil?" was asked by the Indians whom John Eliot tried to convert; and they also asked why, if God was all-powerful, he did not overcome the Devil and abolish hell. John Eliot did not find it easy to answer such a theological conundrum. Such questions, as the darky minister said, would upset any system of theology.

The *Baptist Examiner* finds the question extremely simple. It answers: "God did not make the Devil. It was the Devil who made the Devil, and God had no hand in it." This is unscriptural and blasphemous. The Bible says the Lord made all things for himself, "yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." To say the Devil made himself is to seat him on the throne of omnipotence.

The bicycle is responsible for much enjoyment, otherwise desecration of the Sabbath; and in America it is proposed that each church should provide a room in which the cycles may be housed during service. A bicycle room may form an even more necessary adjunct to a church than a vestry.

Dr. Jessopp, the able essayist and antiquary, has demolished the saintship of St. William of Norwich, a boy said to have been crucified by the Jews in Thorpe Wood on Good Friday. *Daylight* remarks that a few Freethinking spirits have argued that it was simply an ecclesiastical means for plundering the rich Jews, and the Dean of Norwich now seems to admit as much.

Obituary.

ON Sunday last we consigned to the grave the remains of one of the sturdiest Freethinkers of the North—Robert Weightman, the most energetic member of the Sunderland Branch. Born near Alnwick in 1857, at ten years of age he left school with a most limited education, and worked in a coal-mine. About 1872 he became an inquirer into the truth or falsity of the popular religion; and when, in 1879, he heard Joseph Symes and Charles Bradlaugh, his Atheism was confirmed. He eventually became secretary and lecturer to the Sunderland Branch, and never wavered for a moment, though he had faced the danger of sudden and immediate death for months. He died, as he had lived, an apostle of Freethought. The bursting of a large blood-vessel carried him off in a few minutes. There was a large gathering of Freethinkers and fellow railway-men at the grave. Austin Holyoake's service was impressively read by Mr. S. M. Peacock, who was accompanied by many Shields friends. A Sunderland member gave a beautiful farewell address.—W. R. STANSELL.

DIED at Devonport on April 25, and buried on May 2, Robert Redding, aged seventy-eight. He was followed to his grave by a goodly number of his brother Oddfellows, one of whom read their Burial Service at his graveside. Some members of the Secular Society, of which he was a member since 1876, also followed. He was buried according to his wish, without a clergyman of any kind. His last words to me were that science was kinder than Christianity.—THOMAS SEARLE.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 10, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester:—11, "The New Education Bill"; 3, "Count Tolstoi's Christianity"; 6.30, "The Curse of Creeds."

May 17, Liverpool; 24, Glasgow Conference; 31, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 10, Plymouth; 11, Devonport; 12, Liskeard; 13, Tavistock; 15, Plymton; 17, Plymouth; 24, Glasgow—the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. 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.

W. SIMONS.—It is a good idea, and should be welcome to poorer Freethinkers, particularly in North London.

R. E. HOLDING.—Shall be very happy to see you at Glasgow. There are cheap trips from London.

JOSEPH SEDDONS.—The report of a debate held on April 23 and 24 might have reached us before May 4. It is too late for insertion in this week's issue, which we regret, as it will probably be looked for by those who heard Mr. Cohen's speeches.

S. H. C.—The twaddle of an anonymous writer, sent by an anonymous correspondent, is not a subject for serious criticism.

J. DUNSMORE.—Will see what can be done with it.

JOHN HILL (Northampton).—It is absolutely untrue that Mr. Foote offered to go to Northampton to support or oppose any candidate at the last general election. Mr. Ashdowne, the secretary of the Radical Association, was never written to by Mr. Foote on that or any other subject. Mr. Foote was ignorant until now of Mr. Ashdowne's existence on this planet. If Mr. Ashdowne "read" such a "letter from Mr. Foote" to the Executive, he is either a reckless liar or a person very easily imposed upon. Where is the "letter"? Let it be produced.

W. D. ROLLEY.—Thanks. See paragraph.

F. CRESSWELL.—It will do excellently. See "Sugar Plums."

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—W. J. Cone, 1s. Per Miss Vance: H. D. Peters, 1s.; W. Hilton, 1s.

W. GARNETT.—Mr. Foote's *Sign of the Cross* is not a mere reprint of the articles which appeared in the *Freethinker*. A great deal of entirely fresh matter has been added, especially on the historical side, which is after all the most important. The critical part has also been very considerably amplified. There are forty-eight large pages of matter.

W. DYSON.—Pleased to hear you have enrolled some new members in the Barnsley Branch through Mr. Cohen's visit. Hope your two representatives will be able to go to Glasgow. We shall write on Marie Corelli's *Mighty Atom* next week.

SUNDERLAND.—Robert Weightman was one of the sturdiest men and Freethinkers we ever met. He gave all his leisure to public causes. He knew he might die at any moment, through his heart trouble, but he never faltered in his active devotion to truth, liberty, and progress. His loss will be felt by the Sunderland Freethinkers.

T. O. D.—We hope Mr. Churton Collins's lecture on "Was Shakespeare an Agnostic?" will be published. We shall probably recur to the subject.

W. BAILEY.—Order handed to Mr. Forder. Balance shall be devoted as you desire. Thanks.

E. PACK.—The reference is to Mr. Foote's pamphlet entitled *A Virgin Mother*—one of the "Bible Romances." Anyone can read and see whether it is "obscene." Of course it exposes an obscene story and the Christian doctrine built upon it; but it would puzzle any reader to find a questionable word in the whole pamphlet. Mr. Foote puts his name to all his writings, and is ready to defend them if anybody cares to attack them in a court of law. But he is not going to prosecute the wretched creature who dishonors the name of Bradlaugh. A Christian jury would never send a Christian to prison for libelling a Freethinker, and a civil action against a man of no substance is simply a waste of money. When we gave that school a lesson some time ago we tackled the publisher, who had something to lose.

THE continuation of our article on "Ingersoll 'Lies'" is still further postponed in consequence of the press of other matter. Fortunately it is a subject that will keep—at least Ingersoll will.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cape Argus—Daylight—New York Tribune—Literary Digest—New York Public Opinion—Yorkshire Post—Echo—Blue Grass Blade—Liberator—Truthseeker—Open Court—Littlehampton Advertiser—Literary Guide—De Dageraad—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Stewartry Observer—Torch of Anarchy—Reynolds's Newspaper—Freethought Ideal—Secular Thought.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE delivers three lectures to-day (May 10) in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester. The subjects should prove attractive to the local Freethinkers. Before the evening lecture Mr. Foote will give a poetical reading.

Mr. Foote's visit to Northampton on Sunday was scarcely a fair test of what can be done there in the way of Free-thought propaganda. The visit was only decided upon on the previous Monday, and owing to a local accident the printing was only finished on the Friday. The announcement was, therefore, too short to reach the general public. However, the two meetings were fairly well attended, and the audiences were most enthusiastic. After the evening lecture a considerable number remained to talk with Mr. Foote about forming a new Branch of the N.S.S. Names were taken down, and Mr. Bull consented to act as secretary, at least for the present. A meeting is to be held this evening (May 10) for the purpose of establishing the new Branch, and making arrangements for further lectures, in which effort the Branch is promised assistance from headquarters.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured twice last Sunday to improved audiences in Birmingham. Friends were present from Wolverhampton, Westbromwich, Walsall, and others surrounding districts. The audiences marked their appreciation of the lectures by enthusiastic applause. Mr. Daniel Baker presided on each occasion, and it was pleasing to see the hearty reception he received on taking the chair in the evening. Mr. Watts has been lecturing in Birmingham during the week under Mr. Foote's scheme. On Monday evening he had a crowded (free) meeting at the Bristol-street Board School, his lecture being on the new Education Bill. At the conclusion a resolution, proposed by Mr. R. H. Bransby and seconded by Mr. R. Taylor, was carried unanimously, declaring the Bill to be an attack upon Board schools, and affirming that the whole trouble arose through the treachery of the Nonconformists to their old principle that the State should have nothing to do with Religion.

To-day, Sunday, May 10, Mr. Watts lectures morning and evening in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth, when we hope the friends will muster in full force to support the local Branch of the N.S.S. in their energetic propagandist efforts. During the week Mr. Watts lectures in the surrounding districts under Mr. Foote's scheme.

The Agenda of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference appears in another part of this week's *Freethinker*. The most important item, no doubt, is the President's proposal with respect to the Society's disabilities in consequence of the Blasphemy Laws. He will give full details of the scheme he has been for some time working out under legal advice, and if it gains the approval of the Conference, as he anticipates it will, immediate action will be taken to carry it into effect. Mr. Watts's proposal is also important, and should receive very serious consideration, whatever course is decided upon by the voting.

Delegates and other members will find that the railway rates are considerably reduced at Whitsuntide. Tourist tickets are issued cheaply, and there are excursion trains to and from all parts of the country.

Mr. J. P. Gilmour, 439 Victoria-road, Govanhill, Glasgow, will be pleased to secure accommodation for persons who mean to attend the Conference, if they will communicate with him. They should state the class of accommodation they require.

The fifth Annual Meeting of the Humanitarian League was held at 32 Sackville-street on Tuesday, April 21, under the presidency of Mr. Ernest Bell, who gave an interesting address on the aims and work of the Society. The Report for 1895 shows that the year has been one of great activity and progress, a number of public meetings having been held, including the National Humanitarian Conference, and various publications having been issued. The Report points out that, as a result of the League's efforts during the past five years, the humanitarian movement has been greatly advanced. "We may claim some credit," it says, "for the increased public interest in the Criminal Law and Prison System, and other important matters; as also for the more democratic element that has lately been introduced into the crusade against Vivisection. That our purpose has been fulfilled will not be doubted by anyone who has watched the advances made against the barbarities of the private slaughter-house, of stag-hunting, rabbit-coursing, dog-cropping, and what the League has named 'murderous millinery'—a title that seems likely to be a lasting one. The Sport question, in particular, has been lifted, by the League's action, out of the category of sentimental into that of

practical problems; and, speaking generally, we think we may congratulate ourselves on having brought social reformers and zoophilists into line."

De Dageraad, for May, opens with "Facts and Conclusions," taken from Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*. W. Vermaat writes on "Agnosticism," and there is a complete translation of Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword*.

The *Manchester Guardian*, in a review of Mr. Foote's pamphlet recently published by the Humanitarian League, says: "It contains much information as to the cost of war, and many considerations in favor of more rational methods of settling the differences of nations, and the rulers of nations, than that of brute force as represented by standing armies." The *Huddersfield Examiner* says: "There is some straight talking in the nineteenth of the Humanitarian League's publications, in which G. W. Foote details the horrors, abominations, and waste of war in his pamphlet—*The Shadow of the Sword*.....It is a powerful protest."

For some time the Islington Branch has held Sunday morning meetings in Prebend-street. It has given the spot a good trial, but, finding the ground unfruitful, it intends to try Highbury Fields (Highbury Corner), where larger and more hopeful audiences are to be obtained. As the Socialists meet there at 12, and there is only room for one meeting, the Freethinkers will have to commence at 10.45. Local residents will please note.

The Finsbury Branch began its open-air summer campaign on Sunday morning, when Mr. C. Cohen lectured to a large audience. The Branch officers were highly delighted with the result of the collection. Lectures will be continued on Clerkenwell-green every Sunday morning until October.

Mr. W. Simons asks us to state that Freethinkers who desire to join the annual excursion this year, but are doubtful about being able to find the whole of the cost in their pockets at the time, can pay for their tickets by instalments at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute on Monday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. A penny will be charged for the subscription card, but the work of keeping accounts will be done gratuitously. The Committee consists of Messrs. G. Ward, A. Guest, W. Davey (treasurer), and W. Simons (secretary).

The *Islamic World*, for April, reaches us on May 2. The opening article is on "The Political Relations of England and Turkey," which certainly ought to be up to date. A notable, though brief, paper is directed against polygamy by a Moslem, who esteems the Islam of the philosophers, and not that of the fakirs.

The National Gallery is now open to the public on Sunday afternoon, as well as the Bethnal Green and South Kensington Museums. Arrangements are being made for the opening of the British Museum. "Chilperic" informs us that he will be happy to accompany Mr. Wheeler in showing visitors round.

The writers on the *Stewartry Observer* must be on the fair way to the everlasting bonfire, which, as is well known, is reserved for honest and sensible persons. It has some excellent observations on the Sunday opening of museums, quite enough to damn it for ever in the eyes of old-fashioned Sabbatarian Scotsmen. Yet we learn that the *Observer* has a good circulation in Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, and Wigtownshire.

"Peripatetic" writes in the *Norwich Daylight* on "A Vanishing Hell," contrasting the teaching of Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell* with modern dilutions of the old article, and winding up with B. V.'s translation of Béranger's chant, "The Devil is Dead."

The *Nineteenth Century* has two papers in opposition to the New Education Bill. The first is by Mr. T. J. Macnamara, who thinks the only wise policy is to concentrate on such improvements as may really make the measure what it professes to be, and who, of course, claims that there shall be no differentiation between Board and Voluntary schools in the distribution of State aid. The second is by the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, who presents the Nonconformist case, and who holds that the Bill is entirely in the interests of the Anglican and Roman Churches. It is satisfactory to note that Mr. Guinness Rogers is being driven in the Secular direction. At least, he says: "We do not ask admission for Nonconformist teachers into Anglican schools, and we have no desire that our creeds or principles should be taught in them. We are opposed to sectarian teaching everywhere. To offer us the opportunity of teaching our own tenets is to mistake the nature of the objection altogether. I do not believe that the scheme can be made to work; and even if it did, it could not secure for the Dissenting child a fair position in the parson's school." The Nonconformist broadens out

when he feels the hand of power over him, and perhaps may do so still more when he begins to feel the pressure.

The *Daily Chronicle* of May 5 has a leader on Paine's *Age of Reason*, in which it says of his biblical criticism that it is "all through sober and sensible." "He arrived at results some of which are now accepted by people inside the Churches, as well as by the great mass of intelligent men everywhere." Verily, a good deal has happened within the century. At the beginning of it Freethinkers went to prison wholesale for selling *The Age of Reason*—now it is discovered that the author was next door to being a Christian.

Professor Huxley is another person who, according to the Bishop of Ripon, was almost a Christian. Speaking at the Philosophical Hall, Leeds, he accorded to Huxley a place among the worthiest and greatest, on the broad ground that, whether he erred in his judgment or not, the spirit of truth was in him, and he used his gifts honestly to promote it. This was very broad on the part of Dr. Carpenter, but, in the effort to secure an alliance with the memory of Huxley, he knocks the bottom out of his own Church. For what is the use of the Christian scheme of salvation if Huxley could be among the worthiest of men without it?

Mr. F. Cresswell is getting up a petition to the Committee of the Public Libraries of Newcastle-on-Tyne, desiring that the *Freethinker* may be allowed to lie upon the table in all the reading-rooms. Signatures can be taken at Mr. Peter Weston's shop, 77 Newgate-street. Mr. Cresswell says he has six petition sheets out, and is doing very well with all of them.

A well-known literary man to whom Mr. Foote sent a copy of his *Sign of the Cross*, a criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play of that name, writes: "I think you show up its historical absurdities excellently. My only feeling is that you do the miserable twaddle too much honor in taking it seriously for a moment. It is like breaking, not a butterfly, but (say) an earwig, on the wheel. However, no doubt it does service to nail its sheer misrepresentations to the counter.....What a satire the whole thing is on clerical culture! Fancy a windy humbug like Wilson Barrett making the whole Anglican hierarchy dance to his wheezy piping!"

Mr. Charles Durrant, an active Freethinker, is a candidate for the Hampstead Vestry, and we hope he will be returned. Freethinkers who are willing to assist his candidature should communicate with Mr. A. Davies, 3 Gondar Mansions, Mill-lane, Hampstead, N. W.

Mr. W. G. Hayward, who ran for the Littlehampton School Board on the secular ticket, was elected second on the poll.

The *Glasgow News* somehow made the discovery—at any rate, it announced—that Secularism was at its last gasp. Not only had the London Hall of Science been lost, but the Glasgow Secularists had also been forced to relinquish their hall! Mr. Gilmour wrote a reply to the *News*, and it was fortunately inserted. After pointing out that Freethought propaganda is still carried on energetically in London, and that Mr. Foote has actually made an attack upon the West-end and delivered several courses of lectures at St. James's Hall, Mr. Gilmour remarks that the Glasgow Secularists have not "relinquished" anything. They were jockeyed out of the Ingram-street hall, but they immediately took another in Brunswick-street—and a change of address is not exactly a funeral.

Mr. Gilmour concludes as follows: "Secularism is stronger than it has ever been before. One proof of this is to be found in the fact that the annual Conference of the National Secular Society is to be held in this city next month. As you remark, we certainly do find the battle with a rich and powerful orthodoxy 'dreich' enough, especially as, under the Blasphemy Laws, our organisation is outlawed, and we are rendered incapable of receiving or of administering bequests of money or property left for the propagation of anti-Christian doctrine; but we are hard to kill, on the principle, perhaps, that threatened men live long; and, after seventy years' unbroken existence as a public body in Glasgow, we most respectfully decline to accept this latest invitation to consider ourselves defunct."

A public debate on Secularism took place on April 23 and 24 between Mr. C. Cohen and the Rev. H. W. Dick. The Secular Hall, Manchester, was crowded on each occasion. Mr. Dick appears to have discussed more personalities than principles, and finally he tried to fasten a lot of Malthusian literature upon the N.S.S., although there is absolutely nothing about that subject in the Society's principles and objects. This ridiculous and rather malignant move was checked by Mr. Cohen, who expected something of the kind,

and was prepared to meet it. We are informed that Mr. Cohen's final peroration was admirable, and quite "electrified" the audience. The chair on the first night was taken by Mr. Walter Payn (Secularist), and on the second night by Mr. Walter Street (Christian).

Mr. A. B. Moss, who is a member of the Camberwell Vestry, stands for re-election, and will, of course, be supported by all Freethinkers in the division. It is No. 1 Ward, and the election takes place on May 16th.

Mr. Moss's annual holiday commences on July 25, and ends on August 15. He will spend a portion of it at Rhyl, in North Wales. While in the neighborhood he will be glad to visit Liverpool, Manchester, Bolton, and other places, under the President's lecture scheme. Branches should write to Mr. Moss for dates, addressing letters to him at 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.

The addresses of Mr. Touzeau Parris at the Failsworth Secular School were well attended, especially so in the evening, when the school was quite full. The collections in aid of the school funds amounted to a little over £12. The choir in connection with the school, and the Failsworth string band, rendered some exceedingly good music; and, viewed in every light, the day was a complete success.

In response to our last week's appeal, a generous Freethinker has sent Miss Vance a cheque to cover the deficit of £5 on the expenses of the Children's Party. The official receipt ought to pass him into heaven if he ever gets near the gate.

The Dramatic Performance which is to take place at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, on Thursday evening, May 21, in aid of the Lecture Fund, ought to attract a large gathering of Freethinkers. A full advertisement of this function appears in the present number of the *Freethinker*. Mr. Foote will give a selection from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, and Mr. Watts will take the part of Joseph Surface in a scene from the *School for Scandal*. Miss Vance, Miss Brown, and Miss Katie Watts are also included in the programme. The occasion will be a good one for viewing the hall which Mr. Foote has taken for Sunday evening lectures for six months from May 31.

Marie Corelli's *Mighty Atom* is an anti-infidel novel, and a very foolish one too; but as it is being puffed in the newspapers, and praised by the clergy, we intend to have an article upon it in our next issue. The article will be from the pen of Mr. Foote.

SOCIALISM AND SECULARISM.

(Concluded from p. 278.)

WAR often springs from economic causes, as when the starving inhabitants of an impoverished country invade a richer territory, either to get food, or, if they are strong enough, to occupy it permanently. In other cases, of which the Northern barbarians, who harassed the later Roman Empire, are a good example, men find it easier to live by spoliation than by honest labor, and accordingly make a trade of thieving with violence. But it is generally admitted that wars of spoliation and conquest sink into insignificance compared with the frightful homicidal convulsions for which religion is responsible. Religious hatred transforms otherwise humane men into monsters, and "fences about all crimes with holiness." It is idle to say that the Crusades had primary reference to any question of sustenance. The sole object of all the disastrous military expeditions to the Holy Land was to redeem Christendom from the wholly imaginary disgrace of allowing the "infidel" Moslem to desecrate the "holy places" where Christ had lived and died. Nor can anyone seriously maintain that the harrying of the Netherlands by the butcher Alva; the inveterate religious wars between Catholic and Protestant nations, or the still more ghastly fratricidal struggles between members of the same race, and sometimes of the same family, on account of differences of faith; the importation of slavery into America; the immolation of tens of thousands of persons of both sexes, and little children, during the witchcraft delusion; the envenomed opposition of the Church to science, to free inquiry, and to popular education, were all the outcome of simple, economic factors. Finally, consider the facts connected with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. When Henri IV. came to the throne, France was prone and bleeding after generations of hideous civil

war between Catholic and Huguenot, with its bloody sacrament of Saint Bartholomew. Henri, like the wise and noble prince that he was, cared less for the spiritual than for the temporal interests of his subjects, and by the Edict of Nantes he conferred security of life and property, with the legal right to liberty of worship, upon the Huguenots. As everyone knows, they became the most loyal subjects and the best citizens in the realm, and, by their industry and enterprise, laid the foundations of the manufacturing and commercial system of modern France. All went well until, in his devout old age, Louis XIV. suffered some heavy family bereavements, and several humiliating military reverses. Then, prompted perhaps by Madame de Maintenon, the credulous dotard discovered that he must have offended his celestial suzerain by tolerating those pestilent Huguenots. This surmise soon grew to be a fixed idea with *le Grand Monarque*, and ultimately, despite the entreaties and remonstrances of his wisest and trustiest advisers, Louis signed the fatal fiat of Revocation, which exiled not less than 230,000 of the very flower of his people, and consigned tens of thousands more to be the sport and quarry of a lawless soldiery, to whose nameless brutalities the excesses of the Terror were as humanity itself. France suffered economically for this in a dislocation of industry and shock to the national credit, which endured, with exacerbations at shorter and shorter intervals, until the Revolution had performed its tremendous work of demolition and redress.

Now, I venture to ask: Can anyone honestly insist that the economic factor alone militated for the expatriation of the Huguenots? "That is all very well," protests some representative of the doctrine I am countering, "but there is no possibility of any recurrence of such an act of religious insanity. The world has grown wiser and freer; men no longer hate one another because they do not mumble the same litany, or kneel at the same shrine. Their sense of the claims of human brotherhood is stronger than the misanthropy of their creeds." Happily, there is much force in this representation, but it is only half the truth. It is undeniable that the sectarian spirit fostered by the theological dogma of exclusive salvation is still virulent enough to set nation against nation, party against party, and man against man. The very gutter-bloods pommel one another for Christ's sake. In Uganda the Catholic negro cracks the skull of the Protestant Quashee, and Quashee returns the compliment by lying in wait with a shot-gun that he may most lovingly salute his dear brother in the Lord. And they both think it is ever so much better fun than the ancient inter-tribal style of fighting. Then, when you bagged your nigger, and had bolted all that was digestible of him, there was an end of the business; but now you have the holy gratification of knowing that you have sent him to roast for all eternity in the Devil's oven.

In Anatolia the Moslem slaughters his Christian fellow-subjects and plunders their property all for the glory of Allah, who gloats over the extermination of the accursed Giaour. In civilised Europe we have recently seen the indecent exhibition of exultation on the part of the Ultramontanes over the defeat of the Italians by the Abyssinians, because Italy's extremity may be the Pope's opportunity for regaining that temporal power which his predecessors turned to such sinister purposes that Europe became a vast battle-ground, and the Papal States a byword for all that was infamous. Half the difficulty with Ireland is religious. The social reformer who seeks to arouse the people to a due sense of their degradation, and of the magnitude of their wrongs, is baffled by the mental inertia and meanness of spirit, begotten of the age-long teaching of the Church, that, as the powers that be are ordained of God, it is the duty of every good Christian to obey them with all docility. Add to this the prescription as to the perpetuity of poverty, the injunction to multiply and replenish the earth, and the pauperising and demoralising effects of Christian almsgiving, and you have a combination admirably designed to make and breed that most pitiable of all objects—the willing slave, who cannot be got to understand what liberty means, and who is often as proud of his badge of servitude as if it were a free man's prize of honor.

The Socialist often wonders why the poor are so slow to respond to his appeals, why they do not more truly distinguish friend from enemy, and why they are so loth to rise against their oppressors; but the anomaly is intelligible enough to the Secularist. It is as impossible to make the average man of any class, but especially of the commonalty, think for

himself all at once as it would be to force a new-born infant to walk unaided. Indeed, the child is in the better case, for it has at least a developing mechanism for locomotion, and the potential nervous energy to work it; while in the adult the intellectual fibre, so to speak, has either atrophied through disuse or degenerated from abuse, so that, as far as his understanding is concerned, he is little better than an idiot. Physical exhaustion, as a product of the wear and tear of the struggle for existence, may account in part for this intellectual impotency; but there can be no doubt that the primary cause of the mischief lies in the emasculating influence of religion. To make thinkers and insurgents of men we must isolate them in youth from the infection of theological and all other dogmas. We must train them to observe, to reason, and to act; not in order to reach an arbitrarily imposed end, nor to square all their findings with cut-and-dry formulas, but with the one inviolable obligation of proclaiming what they judge to be the truth, and of following it whithersoever it may lead them. Speculative questions touching the wider issues of life and thought will keep until the growing mind is stocked with the certainties of experience, and equipped with the method of right reasoning. Then, uninfluenced by the preconceptions implanted by the schools of theology and orthodox metaphysics, there is little fear that the judgment will readily surrender to the solicitations of unreason. In this deliverance of the young from the ecclesiastical yoke lies our one great hope for the future of the race. Raise a few generations of men and women whose minds are their own, and who know their own minds, and most of the problems that so grievously beset the body politic would soon receive rational settlement. We must bend all our energies to the attainment of this supreme object. Not that we can afford to neglect other subsidiary means of enlarging society from the incubus of superstition and the miseries of civil misrule. Nor is the Secularist usually remiss in this respect. He is invariably a public-spirited citizen, who associates himself with every well-considered scheme for the improvement of the material and moral condition of the commonwealth and of the world; for the rights and interests of humanity have always held the first place in the Freethinker's affections.

In an age when credulity was esteemed a virtue, and cruelty a proof of manliness and piety, even the constitutionally cautious Montaigne had the rare courage to dismiss the witchcraft mania with contempt, and to write of the testimony upon which its victims were condemned: "How much more natural and likely do I find it that two men should lie than that one man, in twelve hours' time, should fly with the wind from east to west." It is to Montaigne likewise that we owe, next to Rabelais, the first emphatic denunciation of the downright savagery of the system of training the young then in vogue, and the atrocious practice of judicial torture.

When no voice was raised in protest or pity over the ashes of the murdered Calas, and the beheaded body of the seventeen-year-old la Barre, both done to death by the priests, or to plead the cause of the innocent Madame Montbailly, and the miserable serfs of the Jura, Voltaire made the civilised world ring with the harrowing story of their wrongs. And though Calas and la Barre were beyond recall, and he could not snatch them from the clutches of "the Infamous," as he did Sirven, Voltaire never rested until he had cleared their memories from the ignominy under cover of which the Church sought to hide its guilt.

Rousseau preached the evangel of social equality, and was the first to articulate the plangent signal of the Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." In the *Rights of Man* Thomas Paine promulgated the charter of modern political reform, which served as the starting point and the standard for the men who won the Reform Bill of 1832, who strove mightily to inaugurate Robert Owen's new moral world, and who, sorely disappointed in that hope, but with unshaken faith in human progressibility, applied themselves to "tug at the laboring oar" for the Chartist cause. It is with Paine's political as with his anti-theological doctrine. He was a hundred years in advance of his time. We are only now slowly maturing some of his most sagacious proposals—for example, the Old Age Pensions scheme, the honor of the origination of which Paine shares with Condorcet, although, if we are to believe some of the Midland newspaper oracles, the only original and patent project of the kind is the invention of a living

Brummagem politician. Thanks to Mr. M. D. Conway's monograph, the general public may now learn what has never been a secret to Freethinkers, that Paine was a man of unrivalled political acumen and of universal sympathies. He was, along with the Quakers, among the first to demand the abolition of chattel-slavery, and to maintain the principle so eloquently and convincingly expounded in the Freethinking Mary W. Godwin's book on the Rights of Woman—of the equality of the sexes in respect of political status and educational and industrial opportunity. Having compassed the whole range of human needs and interests, Paine, like Robert Burns, had still an unexhausted tenderness that bestowed itself in a touching appeal for the animals that serve us or minister to our pleasure.

To recite the tale of modern Meliorism, it suffices to tell the bead-roll of the representative Freethinkers of the last three centuries. There is no sphere of present-day life and thought in which, insensibly it may be, but not the less surely, the influence of their teaching and achievement is not felt. At the basis of the very possibility of knowledge and progress lies the right of freedom of discussion. We are still far from an ideal unconstraint in this respect; but such measure of ease as we do enjoy has been won for us by the blood and suffering of a great concourse of martyrs. It was in the cause of free speech that Bruno, Servetus, Vanini, and Dolet perished in the flames; that others, like poor Woolston and that "impassable man," Richard Carlile, languished for weary years, or died in loathsome prisons; while others still were stripped of their worldly possessions, or stood in the pillory, the sport of a bigoted or obscene mob, or wandered and pined in exile, for the truth's sake.

When the Socialist writes or speaks unrestrainedly, as is his habit, does he ever bethink himself of the debt that he owes to the Freethought movement, which has enabled him to exercise this right without let or hindrance, and that it was Charles Bradlaugh who, almost single-handed, fought and defeated two Administrations which sought to revive the old coercive Press Laws of George III., and so shattered the last shackles on liberty of the press in this country? The work of organised Secularism for the last thirty years has consisted largely in the practical vindication of the right of publication and of free speech. Indeed, but for our watchfulness and determination during that time, political and religious liberty would be in a much more backward state than it is. Apply this text all round, and it can easily be shown that there is absolutely no Meliorist movement or measure in which Freethinkers have not been the pioneers or the moving spirits. I am not writing unadvisedly, but in view of evidence collected by careful investigation. Sometimes, after sedulously nursing an unpopular enterprise into strength and prestige, the Secularist has to waive his well-earned right to a place in its councils, if he is not rudely thrust aside expressly because of his heresy by some assertive Christian; and in the end it often happens that the Church steps in and has the effrontery to usurp all the credit for having initiated and carried out the particular reform. The Freethinker can bear this with equanimity if humanity gains by the change, although it does seem a trifle hard that, in the words of the parable, "those should gather who have not strewed." We shall no doubt hear by-and-bye, or posterity will, that the greatest protagonists of Socialism in this century were not Robert Owen on its experimental, and Karl Marx on its historical and theoretical, sides, but the Archbishops of Canterbury. More prodigious monsters of fiction have walked the earth before now, and, in a world still infested by the sea-serpent, who shall say that the breed is extinct? After all, there must be more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in the philosophy of Economic Determinism.

J. P. GILMOUR.

What is man born for but to be a reformer—a remaker of what man has made, a renouncer of falsehood, a restorer of truth and good, imitating the great nature which embosoms us all, and which sleeps no moment on an old past, but every hour repairs herself, yielding us every morning a new day, and with every pulsation a new life?—*Emerson*.

No false theory about the stars ever endangered the light of any single one of them.—*Minot J. Savage*.

Absolute morality is the regulation of conduct in such a way that pain shall not be inflicted.—*Herbert Spencer*.

INFIDEL COLLEGES.

A COMMON gag among these Christian liars and ignoramuses and defamers of infidels is to take the cue from St. Paul's Socratic method, and ask: "What colleges and charitable institutions has infidelity ever built?" These clerical chaps have rammed this gag down the throats of infidels until we have all learned to gulp it down as a matter of course, like we used to do when our mothers held our noses and poured vermifuge into our throats, and gave us the alternatives of swallowing it or choking to death.

I had as good a mother as the best of them, and not very long ago one of these durned fool "trumpet mediums," that called himself Dr. Leonard—the fellow that had the wife that gave me that lambasting I've told you about—professed to call up the spirit of my mother, and make her talk to me through a durned old greasy dinner horn; but I knew he had called up the wrong woman, because she did not say to me: "Charles, keep a little ipecac about the house in case of croup among the children, and put a greased flannel on your chest if you take cold."

But about that college business! Almost just the reverse of what the Christians say about that is what is true. There is not a Christian college in the United States, and there are two infidel colleges and almost a third one.

The first infidel college is Girard College in Philadelphia. Stephen Girard gave \$6,000,000 to build that college when he was one of the only two or three men in America that were worth a million dollars.

He was not only an infidel, but he was so intense an infidel that he put it into the laws of the college that no preacher was ever to be allowed to go into it.

I ran upon a pole-cat once in the dark. For four or five years after that the coat that I had on lay up in the attic, and I could find it without a light the darkest night that ever came. You didn't have to see it; you could smell it! That pole-cat hadn't been in the Cologne water business.

It's the same way about a preacher. You can smell the preacher on him for years after he has quit it. I went to Girard College once, twelve years after I had quit preaching. I had a regular permit card, and had handed it to the porter at the gate, and was passing in when he took a second look at me and said: "Ain't you a preacher?" I said: "No, I used to be one." "Well," said he, "if you have repented of it, it's all right"; and he motioned to me to go on in.

Lick, who built the big college in California, and put in it one of the biggest, if not the biggest, telescope in the world, at a cost of \$500,000, and every cent. of it out of his own money, was an infidel.

The University of Virginia was originated by Thomas Jefferson, another infidel.

If you will think a moment, you will remember that you have never heard of hazing and football-playing and boat-rowing in connection with any of these three institutions.

Now you tell me where there is a Christian college. There is Vanderbilt University, but it is of the Methodists, for the Methodists, and by a Methodist. It is run by Methodists, and the purpose of the institution is to make Methodists. In the same way, the Baptist college at Georgetown, Kentucky, that has in it \$17,000 of John Atherton's distillery money, is to make Baptists, and is run by Baptists. The Presbyterian colleges in Kentucky, at Danville, and Richmond are put there to make Presbyterians, and they all hate each other like the Devil hates holy water; and the University of Kentucky, the money for which was raised with the understanding that it was not to have any religious bias, was raised by a Campbellite, and is now altogether in the hands of that sect, and is run in, and for, and by, the interests of that sect.

There is a State college at Lexington, Kentucky, that was built by, and is supported by, the State, and the Jews and we heathen all have to pay for it just the same as anybody else; but it's run by Christians, and an infidel who has the manhood to say he is an infidel cannot get a professorship in it.

At Cincinnati there is a university supported by the State and city. The richest people in the town are Jews, and nearly all the men in the town are named Moses and Aaron, and Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob and Levy, that don't want any Jesus Christ in them, and would not trust him for a three cent shirt collar if he should come down and light on the Probasco fountain square to-day; and yet these lying, rascally preachers and Christian editors have the cheek to look at an institution of that sort, and then ask: "What colleges has infidelity ever built?"

—The Blue Grass Blade.

EX-REV. C. C. MOORE.

RAMSEY-KEMP TESTIMONIAL FUND.—Dr. Grece, £1 1s.; C., £1 1s.; D. Baker, £1 1s.; N. M. X., 7s. 6d.; J. Greevz Fisher, 10s.; William Bell, 5s.; Mr. Church, 5s.; J. Fulton, 5s.; W. J. Cone, 4s.; E. Calvert, 2s. 6d.; C. D., 2s. 6d.; H. Horrell, 2s. 6d.; A. J. Hooper, 1s.—G. WARD, Hon. Treas.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting, held on Thursday, April 30; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, E. Bater, G. J. Warren, F. Wood, C. Johnson, H. J. Stace, A. F. Taylor, C. Harwood, T. Gorniot, W. Leate, Stanley Jones, and the secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

A letter from Mr. S. P. Putnam, as President of the American Secular Union, and addressed to the Conference, was laid before the meeting.

It was resolved that this Society accept an invitation from the London Trades Council to take part in a Conference "with the view of concerted action being taken to secure the educational well-being of the children of the people," and Mr. Foote, with Messrs. Watts and Moss, were elected as delegates.

The secretary reported upon places of interest suitable for the annual excursion, and it was finally resolved, "That the excursion be to Margate in July," the actual date to be fixed after further inquiries.

The motions from Branches for the Conference Agenda were then read, and additions made by the Executive, which will appear in the full Agenda printed in this number of the *Freethinker*.

Permission was granted for the formation of a new Branch at Motherwell—also for another at Rochdale—consequent upon the successful meetings held under the Lecture Scheme.

The President gave a sketch of the working out of the resolution standing in his name on the Agenda for the Conference, and reported that he had taken the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, under his Lecture Scheme, and he was prepared to risk a prosecution by charging for admission.

Arrangements were made for an Agenda Committee meeting, and the meeting adjourned till May 14 to receive the annual report and balance-sheet.

E. M. VANCE, *Asst. Sec.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Clergyman—"I suppose you know, my dear friend, the difference between patience and long suffering?" Young Lady—"Oh, yes. When you are late in the morning, and we have to wait for you, that requires patience. But when you are preaching, and everybody is anxious for you to come to the end, that is long suffering."

Head of Firm—"Have you had any experience in collecting?" Applicant—"I should say I had. I used to be a country minister."

Chicago—"Have you a Society for the Suppression of Vice in your city?" New York—"Yes, we have such an organisation." Chicago—"And is it accomplishing its aim?" New York—"Well, I should say it was. We have more suppressed vice among us now than at any previous time in our history."

A young lawyer of Coleman, so the story goes, found law business not very lucrative; so he got a job as preacher at McBain. He was called upon to deliver a funeral sermon. After the sermon he proceeded to address the mourners thus: "Ladies and gentlemen, the corpse before you now is in heaven, sure as hell!"

ON A PORTRAIT OF SERVETUS.

THOU grim and haggard wanderer, who dost look
With haunting eyes forth from the narrow page,
I know what fires consumed with inward rage
Thy broken frame, what tempests chilled and shook!
Ah, could not thy remorseless foeman brook
Time's sure devourment, but must needs assuage
His anger in thy blood, and blot the age
With that dark crime which virtue's semblance took!
Servetus! that which slew thee lives to-day,
Though in new forms it taints our modern air;
Still in heaven's name the deeds of hell are done;
The fires of hate are lit for them who dare
Follow their lord along the untrodden way.

—Richard Watson Gilder.

Arriving at correct judgments on disputed questions much depends on the attitude of mind we preserve while listening to, or taking part in, the controversy; and for the preservation of a right attitude it is needful that we should learn how true, and yet how untrue, are average human beliefs.—Herbert Spencer.

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.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.45, Touzeau Parris, "Facts about the Bible that Everyone should Know."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Herbert Burrows, "Secularism and Materialism: their Possibilities and Limits."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. C. Lyons, "Why and How Christianity is Spread."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, J. F. Green, "The Veins of Wealth."

FINSBURY BRANCH: 7, general meeting at 11 Grafton-place, Euston-square.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspar, "Jean Jacques Rousseau."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Goethe's Faust."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. Heaford, "The Social Implications of Secularism."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Holy Ghost."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Sharps and Flats."
CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. Calvert, "Is Free Speech Conducive to Truth and Progress?"

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand): 11.15, R. Forder, "Are the Four Gospels History or Myth?" 3.15, W. J. Ramsey, "Are the Four Gospels History or Myth?"

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, O. Cohen will lecture. Thursday, at 8, S. E. Easton, "Some Bible Celebrities."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, O. Cohen will lecture; 3.30, E. Calvert, "A Historical Review of the Old Testament." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Corner): 10.45, Stanley Jones will lecture.
KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton, "Some Bible Celebrities."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality."

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, H. Courtney, "The Upshot of Secularism."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, Arthur B. Moss, "Crumbling Creeds of Christendom."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "After Death, What?"
REGENT'S PARK: 3, O. Cohen will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, James Rowney will lecture; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, a meeting.
BLACKBURN: Fortnightly meeting at 18 Peter-street.

BRISTOL BRANCH: 2.30, members and friends meet at the Fountain, top of Blackboy Hill, Durdham Down, for ramble to Coombe Dinga, Penpolepoint.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms): 7, Mr. Whitney, "The Christian Religion."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—T. Aitken, "Did Moses Write the Pentateuch?" 6.30, debate between J. P. Gilmour and J. Cassels, "Is the Law of Population the Determining Cause of Poverty?"

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Trumpet, "Why do Men Starve?"

LEEDS BRANCH: Excursion to Ilkley; leaves N.E. station at 2.5. Tea arranged for—see *Leeds Daily News*.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Ernest Newman, "The Life of Frederick Douglass." Important meeting of members and friends after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, G. W. Foote, "The New Education Bill"; 3, "Count Tolstoi's Christianity"; 6.30, "The Curse of Creeds."

ROCHDALE (Board Room No. 2, Co-operative Building, Toad-lane): 6, special meeting to discuss Conference agenda and elect delegate.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, select entertainment.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.30, discussion—"The Education Question."

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

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, a lecture; 6.30, "The Soul and a Future State."

DERBY (Market-place): J. G. Briggs, "The Teachings of Christ Impracticable, Incredible, Ignoble, etc."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 3, S. R. Thompson, "Choose Ye this Day Whom Ye Will Serve."

Lecturers' Engagements.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—May 10, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 17, m. Camberwell, a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 24, New Brompton; 31, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—May 10, Balls Pond.

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AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

HELD IN THE

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