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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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MR. FOOTE'S LETTERS FROM AMERICA.

VI.—CHICAGO AND THE SECULAR CONGRESS.

BEFORE leaving Toronto I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. John Helm, of Port Hope, who came in to hear our last Sunday's lectures in the Auditorium. Mr. Helm took Bradlaugh's *National Reformer* as far back as 1862. He is a staunch Freethinker, and, though living three thousand five hundred miles away, he still subscribes towards the Freethought movement in the old country, and is a regular reader of my own journal. Mr. Watts and I had a pleasant chat with him on the Monday, in which he told us something of his early life, and its hard work and struggles. Rational living, however, has kept him in a wonderful state of preservation. We were astonished to learn that he is nearly eighty. He looks under seventy. I guessed his age at sixty-eight. Mr. Helm has often visited England, and I hope to see him there again.

Mr. Watts and I left Toronto on Thursday afternoon, November 12; and the local *World*, which took no notice of our arrival or our lectures, chronicled our departure. A number of the "saints" saw us off; good, honest, hearty people, whom we were sorry to leave. Still, the parting had its compensations, for they had been killing us with kindness. Their hospitality was quite overwhelming. Mr. Watts knew and loved Toronto before; and now it will always occupy a warm place in my own heart.

During the second week of our stay in Toronto we visited the world-famous Niagara Falls, of which I will give my impressions in a subsequent letter. Meanwhile, I may say that I was not like a certain literary gentleman who was disappointed with the Atlantic. I regard the Niagara Falls as a truly sublime spectacle.

Our journey to Chicago, by the Canadian and Pacific Railway, lasted from four o'clock on Thursday afternoon till eight o'clock on Friday morning. We travelled in the through sleeping car, and happened to have it all to ourselves. The two other occupants on starting were local passengers, who left the train before ten o'clock. We entered into conversation with one of them, an elderly gentleman of pleasant manners and considerable intelligence. When we touched his bias, however, he afforded us a new chapter in the natural history of prejudice. Learning that he was a lawyer, Mr. Watts innocently asked him whether Colonel Ingersoll was of high standing in the legal profession. "Oh, no," replied our travelling companion, "he is nothing as a lawyer. What he does is to go about the country attacking the Bible and everything connected with the Christian religion." Mr. Watts, in whose hands I left the business, put more questions with the same bland innocence, while I looked on as a most ignorant stranger. In reply to these questions, we gathered some surprising information about Ingersoll. "Nobody regarded him as a great man; he was only a third or fourth-rate orator; there were scores of better speakers in the United States; he said some clever things, but he was not in repute with respectable people—in fact, his lectures were mostly patronized by Anarchists, who were the terror of the continent; anybody could engage him to lecture for fifty dollars; he simply talked what had been better said by old Tom Paine, and before Paine by Voltaire." One thing, however, was cheerfully admitted: Ingersoll did not attack morality—in that respect he was a good man. Finally, we learnt that our

travelling companion had never seen or heard Ingersoll in his life. He did not even know that the Colonel lived in New York; according to this gentleman, he lived in Indiana. He thought it was at Indianapolis; but he was not sure of the city, though he was sure of the state. And there we left our companion. He did not know whom he was talking to, and it was too good a joke to spoil.

Although we had that car all to ourselves, I slept but indifferently. Mr. Watts had a good night's rest, which he attributed to an easy conscience. I suppose I should get used to sleeping-car berths in time, and even to the artificial heat of the American trains; but I have always been accustomed to a cool bedroom, with the window open summer and winter, and I could not overcome my habits in a single night.

During the night snow fell, and it was bitterly cold as we entered Chicago. The air struck nippingly as we stepped on to the platform. It was our first taste of sharp weather in America. Fortunately, the next day was milder, and we were again enjoying the close of the Indian summer.

We were conveyed to Sherman House (our hotel) in a 'bus with other passengers. For this ride we paid fifty cents each, or two shillings in English money. At the hotel we met Mr. Putnam and Mr. Eugene Macdonald, of the *Truthseeker*. It was then half-past eight. Breakfasting and dressing, we were at Washington Hall by ten. The room in which the Liberal Congress was held will hold about five hundred persons. A good meeting had assembled, with Judge Waite in the chair. He is an elderly gentleman, of small stature but good brains, who has made scholarly contributions to the literature of Freethought. One of his first duties, after President Putnam had formerly opened the Congress, was to welcome the visitors from England. Mr. Watts and I made brief speeches, which were very warmly applauded. The newspaper reporters made sketches of the principal personages, some of which appeared in the evening journals. Mr. Watts was described in the letterpress as a typical John Bull. American reporting is always a little sensational, and sometimes very much so. Judge Waite asked me to say something about my imprisonment. He said there was no reference to it in my speech at Chickering Hall, which very much surprised him, as, in his experience, a man who went to jail for his principles seldom talked of anything else afterwards. On this occasion, however, he begged me to tell them of my prosecution and incarceration. In doing so, I mentioned that my indictment alleged that I was instigated by the Devil, and I jocularly remarked that, although I really had not the honor of his personal acquaintance, I would rather breakfast with the Devil than with a clergyman, as he was noted for vast intelligence and wide and varied experience. That expression "caught on" with the reporters, and it appeared in all the newspapers. One of them gave the headline: "He would breakfast with Satan." It almost seemed, from the public journals, that I had come to Chicago for the express purpose of uttering that piece of facetiousness. The next day I received a letter from a clergyman in Illinois, advising me to make sure in advance that the Devil would accept my company. My reverend adviser seems to have no doubt that the Devil would accept his company. Perhaps he is right. Time will show.

Mr. Watts and I did not attend the afternoon meeting, as we wanted a rest. I learnt that Editor Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, kept the meeting in a roar for ten

minutes; and I was sorry to miss the fun, though I understand it had little to do with Freethought. In the evening the principal speaker was Mr. M. Florence Johnson, who is an excellent elocutionist. Another speaker was Mr. Pearl W. Geer, President of the Oregon Secular Union. He is a young man, about twenty-five years of age, and his account of positive Secular work, fifteen hundred miles west of Chicago, was most interesting. The Secular Union there is incorporated; a good deal of money has been raised, lecturers have been planted in various parts of the State, Sunday schools have been established, and the foundation has been laid of a Liberal University. A quarterly magazine ministers to the literary wants of the Sunday schools, and the popular propaganda is carried on by a weekly paper called *The Torch of Reason*. The whole of the Union's publications are turned out from its own printing press. I am sorry I cannot visit Oregon to see the Secular work there with my own eyes. I regard it as auguring success for my own project of incorporating a Secular Society in England; a project which I hope to carry into effect immediately on my return to the old country.

President Putnam was in fine form at all the meetings. American methods are somewhat different from ours, but of course they are suited to the circumstances over here. I admired the way in which "Samuel"—as all his colleagues call him, or sometimes "Sam"—made his announcements. He seemed to be telling the audience of something worth ten times the price, something they couldn't miss without losing a splendid bargain. He is also first-rate at taking up a collection, hitting upon the exact psychological moment, and keeping up the steam himself while the collectors go round for the dollars. They take up a collection here at every sitting.

The one unfortunate thing about the Congress is that Ingersoll is not coming, and the newspapers make the most of the fact. Ingersoll is a "gold" man, and a great many of the Liberals are "silver" men. Some of them think he ought to have been on their side, and ridiculously hard words have been flying about. Ingersoll therefore decided not to come to Chicago at all, and his engagement at Vickers's Theatre was cancelled. We only learnt of this on our arrival, and of course we were deeply disappointed. Putnam and Macdonald had to alter the arrangements in a hurry. Mr. Watts and I were to have addressed a mass meeting on Saturday night. It is now arranged that we are to "orate" on Sunday night. The tickets are in great demand, and a crush is expected. The Central Music Hall holds more than two thousand people.

I am writing to catch the English mail while the Congress is still proceeding, and must conclude my account of it in my next letter.

G. W. FOOTE.

A FREETHINKER IN FLEET STREET.

"We walked in the evening in Greenwich Park. He asked me (I suppose by way of trying my disposition): 'Is not this very fine?' Having no exquisite relish of the beauties of nature, and being more delighted with the busy hum of men, I answered: 'Yes, sir; but not equal to Fleet-street.' Johnson: 'You are right, sir.'—*Boswell's Life of Johnson*."

DR. JOHNSON is not recorded to have said: "Sir, let us take a walk down Fleet-street." That was happily invented for him by the late Augustus Sala. But he did say that the major portion of the wit and worth of the country might be found within a mile's radius from his own residence. This is far less true now than in the days of the burly doctor. Yet Fleet-street remains the great literary centre; and in a walk up Fleet-street, from the publishing office of the *Freethinker* in Stonecutter-street, many points of interest are called up. I will jot down a few to illustrate how much a narrow area of London streets may suggest to one who loves to connect the present with the past.

Just behind Mr. Forder's shop is the parish graveyard where Chatterton was buried. The marvellous boy, who perished ere his prime, took poison in his lodgings at Brooke-street, Holborn. He was a Deist, and left lines rejecting the inspiration of the Bible. In front of the graveyard was Shoe-lane, where, in my young days, stood the old forum of discussion known as "Coger's Hall." Hard by was the shop of John Cleave, of the *Chartist Cleave's Gazette*, one of the upholders of a cheap press, and opponent of the Stamp Act in the days of costly news-

papers. On the other side, in Shoe-lane, the *National Reformer* used to be issued by John Watts. I remember him well, though it is over thirty years since I attended his funeral. Opposite was Farringdon Market—the old Fleet Market. Over the way at Farringdon-street was the old Fleet debtors' prison, where easy marriages were performed in the bad old times. Pennant, in his *Account of London* (1793), says: "In walking along the street in my youth, on the side next this prison, I have often been tempted by the question: 'Sir, will you be pleased to walk in and be married?'" "The parson," continues Pennant, "was seen walking before his shop, a squalid profligate figure clad in a tattered plaid and night-gown, with a fiery face, and ready to couple you for a dram of gin or roll of tobacco." The most famous of these Fleet parsons, Dr. Gainham, was known as the Bishop of Hell. The sky-pilots now found in the neighborhood are very superior persons; if of the Anglican variety, possibly bound for Sion College or St. Paul's; if of the dissenting breed, for the Memorial Hall, erected in memory of the ministers who came out of the Church in 1662. Behind the Memorial Hall, in Belle Sauvage-yard, is the large establishment of Messrs. Cassell; and behind that is Newgate Prison, whence Judge North sentenced our editor for blasphemy. Here, from 1824 to '26, a number of Richard Carlile's shopmen were confined for upholding the freedom of the press, and Campion, Clarke, Hassell, and Perry conducted the *Newgate Monthly Magazine*, a Freethought periodical written in gaol. Beyond is Smithfield, the scene of so many martyrdoms, and where Bartholomew Legate was burnt to death for anti-Trinitarian heresy, as late as 1612. The sight of St. Paul's may remind us how well paid are its deans and canons, while its noble architect erected it on a pittance of £200 a year. But it is his monument. Comte said the heavens declare the glory of Kepler and Newton; so the Church of St. Paul declares the glory of Wren. *Si monumentum requiris Circumspice*. At the side is Paternoster-row—the row of booksellers, once that of rosary sellers, of which there is one poor Catholic remnant next door to a rabid Protestant purveyor of trashy anti-Catholic literature. In front of St. Paul's is the renovated statue of Queen Anne, of whom it used to be said that she had her back to the Church, and her nose facing a brandy-shop.

At Ludgate Circus we are in the thick of the printers' district, full of memories of the past. Where the post-office now is was the Bridewell, where, as Pope reminds us in his *Dunciad*, church service was followed by the whipping of criminals:—

This labour past, by Bridewell all descend
(As morning prayer and flagellation end)
To where Fleet ditch with disemboguing streams
Rolls the large tribute of dead dogs to Thames.

Just over the bridge was the Rotunda, where the Devil's chaplain used to orate, clad in full canonicals. The church on the left going up Fleet-street is St. Bride's, which still exacts church rates. At the west-end of the church Lovelace, the poet, was buried. At the corner is the *Punch* office, redolent of memories of Jerrold, Thackeray, Mayhew, Hood, a'Becket, Lemon, Brooks, Doyle, Leach, Keene, and Du Maurier. Just beyond is Salisbury Square, where the Bishop of Salisbury had a palace. Here Clarendon lived, and at a house in the square Richardson wrote *Pamela*. Here was the old Duke Theatre, established by Sir W. Davenant. It is mentioned in the MS. book of Sir Henry Herbert, master of the revels to Charles I.: "I committed Cromes, a broker in Long-lane, the 16 Feb., 1634, to the Maralsey, for lending a church robe with the name of *Jesus* upon it to the players in Salisbury-court, to present a Flamen, a priest of the heathens." A little farther west was the convent of the Carmelites, or Whitefriars, whose house and gardens extended from Fleet-street to the Thames. In 1608 a charter of King James exempted this district from the jurisdiction of the City of London, and under the slang name of Alsatia it became the asylum sanctuary of debtors, cheats, and other infamous characters, and is graphically described by Sir Walter Scott in the *Fortunes of Nigel*. It was at the corner of the old Alsatia, now Bouverie Street, that Mr. Bradlaugh established the shop of the Freethought Publishing Company. At the opposite corner was one of the three Fleet-street shops owned in succession by Richard Carlile—Nos. 53, 84, and 62; and over the way was the Fleet-street House, No. 147, established by Mr. G. J. Holyoake. What memories

of bygone battles for freedom do these names call up! What stories, too, are connected with all the newspaper offices and taverns in the street!

Here is Mitre-court, leading to the Temple, with its memories of great lawyers, and its Gnostic Temple church, outside which is the tomb of Oliver Goldsmith. But we must not linger, for a little book might easily be written on the Temple. Just notice, however, an instance of how inscriptions may deceive. The perfumers at the corner of Temple Gate have a notice that it was "Formerly the Palace of Cardinal Wolsey." As a matter of history, it was built in the reign of James I., when it was the office of the Duchy of Cornwall. Where now is the banking-house of Messrs. Barclay used to be the Devil Tavern, where Ben Jonson held his club, and where in after years Swift, Garth, and Addison met. Over the way, at the corner of Chancery-lane, Abraham Cowley was born. Hard by lived Isaac Walton, to whom a memorial window is erected in new St. Dunstan's Church, where he was buried. Here at the old church, which formerly occupied the site, used to be two wooden figures of wild men, who struck the hour with a little tap of their clubs. Some said they represented Gog and Magog, others that they were substitutes for the original effigies of St. Dunstan and the Devil. But we must turn up Fetter-lane, anciently called Fewter's-lane from the number of idle persons who used to frequent it. In Fetter-lane resided the Puritan-Republican, "Praise God Barebones," Dryden, and Swedenborg. Turning round by Fleur-de-lis-court, where the Positivists have their hall, we are soon in Gough-square, where a tablet is over one of the houses where Dr. Johnson lived in this neighborhood; and before us is 17 Johnson's-court, long the publishing office of the *National Reformer*, and where I first met that devoted servant of Freethought, Austin Holyoake.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE CLAIMS OF THEISM.

(Concluded from page 759.)

IN corroboration of the view we have expressed as to the fallacy of the Theistic claim, that God is "the first Cause" of all that exists, we may quote Sir William Hamilton, who said: "The notion of a God is not contained in the notion of a mere first cause; for in the admission of a first cause the Atheist and Theist are at one." Referring to this observation, Professor Knight, of the University of St. Andrews, remarks: "So far as this argument can carry us, the being assumed to exist is, therefore, a blank essence, a mere zero, an everything=nothing. Nature remains a fathomless abyss, telling us naught of its whence or its whither. It is the fountain-head of an ever-inscrutable mystery, which overshadows and over-masters us. . . . That something always was, everyone admits; but the question between the rival philosophic schools is as to what that something was and is. We may choose to call it the first cause (an explanation which implies that our notion of endless regression has broken down), and we may say that we have reached the notion of an uncaused cause. But is that a conceivable notion at all? Is it intelligible and representable? Do we not, in the very assumption, bid farewell to reason, and fall back on some form of faith?" (*Aspects of Theism*, pp. 56 and 57).

The same author also shows how groundless is the claim that the existence of God is proved by "the necessary laws of mind" and the "design argument." He says: "The God of the logical understanding, whose existence is supposed to be attested by the necessary laws of mind, is a mere projected shadow of self. It has, therefore, no more than an ideal significance. The same may be said, with some abatements, of the Being whose existence is inferred from the phenomena of design. The ontologist and the teleologist unconsciously draw their own portrait; and, by an effort of thought, project it outward on the canvas of infinity" (*ibid.*, p. 120). It must not be overlooked that so futile is the argument from design considered to be to prove the existence of God that it has been given up by many modern Theists. We refer the reader to W. M. W. Call's book, entitled *Final Causes*, for ample evidence of this. It has been truly said that, "if we are at liberty to infer an Archetype above from the traces of mind beneath,

must not the phenomena of moral evil, malevolence, and sin be, on the same principle, carried upwards by analogy? Look, then, at the phenomena as a whole. Consider the elaborate contrivances for inflicting pain, and the apparatus so exquisitely adjusted to produce a wholesale carnage of the animal tribes. The whole world teems with the proof of such intended carnage. Every organism has parasites which prey upon it; and not only do the superior tribes feed upon the inferior (the less yielding to the greater), but the inferior prey at the very same time no less remorselessly upon the superior. If, therefore, the inference of benevolence be valid, the inference of malevolence is at least equally valid; and, as equal and opposite, the one notion destroys the other." This reasoning is, to us, conclusive against the design argument. When we see an article of manufacture we can reasonably conclude that the article had a maker. Upon the same principle, it is said, we ought to infer, on looking at the universe, that that had a maker. Apart from the fact that persons who urge this fallacy overlook our contention, that no evidence has yet been produced that the universe ever was made, there is no analogy whatever between the two cases. From experience we learn that articles are manufactured; but we have no experience of the making of the universe.

The argument based on supposed supernatural contrivance in nature appears to us to have no weight. A person who contrives evinces an amount of inability for the time being. To contrive, as we understand the word, is to endeavor to work out some plan, or to improve a project that may be at first but roughly sketched out. After some thought and calculation, the contriver probably discovers how improvement in his plans can be obtained. But the additional ability possessed reveals a previous shortcoming, which could not reasonably be ascribed to an infinite personal God. Besides, if we grant that some beings were designed for a life of happiness, we are compelled to admit that others were designed for inflicting suffering and death. The pleasure experienced by those who enjoy their food is obtained at the expense of others that are devoured. The earth, which furnishes us with a landscape of beauty, will, at times, open its chasms to engulf us in their yawning depths. The same law of gravitation which holds man to this planet dashes him to pieces against the rocks. The vegetation which feeds man contains, in some cases, poison that destroys human life. Suppose there exists an almighty being who regulates the universe and guides human life, the fact remains that unprevented calamities still prevail to the terror and discomfort of mankind. Thus the conviction is forced upon us that the existence of pain, misery, and injustice does not harmonize with the belief that the world is governed by an infinitely benevolent being. Reason and humanity proclaim that such a being, if he were the parent of the human family, would have made ample provision for the comfort of his children. If it is asked *why* this should be, the answer is, that parental regard is an unmistakable manifestation throughout the animal kingdom; even the dumb brutes hesitate not to toil with unremitting solicitude to secure comfort for their offspring. It would, therefore, be derogatory to the character of the "Great Parent of all" to suppose him to be less thoughtful for the good condition of his children than are the humblest of his subjects for the welfare of those to whom they have given birth.

Theists claim that psychical powers, being found as they are in the human family, afford the strongest evidence that man was a special creation by God. Now, this is purely a Theistic assumption, based upon the error of supposing that psychical powers are confined to the human race; whereas these powers are certainly to be found in the lower animals—a few of them low down in the scales—and for the rest the difference will be one of degree more than of quality. It will not surely be maintained that perception is peculiar to man; it must exist wherever there are organs of sense, and these extend in some form or other to the lowest phase of animal life. Volition is also met with in all the higher animals; and memory may be observed in the dog, horse, elephant, cat, camel, and numerous other mammals with whose habits every-day life makes us familiar. Even judgment in the form of comparison is often displayed by the domestic animals, the dog in particular. Dr. H. Bischoff, in his *Essay on the Difference between Man and Brutes*, says: "It is impossible to deny the animals, qualitatively and quantitatively, as many mental faculties as we find in man. They possess consciousness. They

feel, think, and judge; they possess a will which determines their actions and motions. Animals possess attachment; they are grateful, obedient, good-natured; and again, false, treacherous, disobedient, revengeful, jealous, etc. Their actions frequently evince deliberation and memory. It is in vain to derive such actions from so-called instinct, which unconsciously compels them so to act."

"Courage and timidity," observes Darwin, "are extremely variable qualities in the individuals of the same species, as is plainly seen in our dogs. Some dogs and horses are ill-tempered, and easily turn sulky; others are good-tempered; and these qualities are certainly inherited. Everyone knows how liable animals are to furious rage, and how plainly they show it." The love of the dog for his master is proverbial; indeed, this noble animal has been known to lick the hand of the vivisector while undergoing at his hands the severest torture. Many animals experience pleasure in the company of their fellows, and are unhappy at a separation being effected. They will show sympathy one for another, and even perform services for each other's benefit. Some animals lie together in large numbers, and never separate except for a very short time, and then only for a purpose which they clearly understand. Darwin observes: "Everyone must have noticed how miserable horses, dogs, sheep, etc., are when separated from their companions, and what affection the two former kind will show on their reunion. It is curious to speculate upon the feelings of a dog who will rest peacefully for hours in a room with his master or any of the family without the least notice being taken of him, and who, if left for a short time by himself, barks and howls dismally." The fact is, the psychical powers appeared first in an incipient form, and then gradually developed through a long course of ages, until they attained their height in humanity.

Theism furnishes no panacea for the ills of life; its God has failed to produce men and women who are unaffected by evil passions, which, in all ages and in all nations, have marred the happiness of the race; neither has he prevented being born into the world many thousands of children who have died before they possessed consciousness of its beauty, its magnitude, and its use. Finally, if we assume that an infinite God is the original source from which all that exists is derived, then it logically follows that all that happens, be it good, bad, or indifferent, is caused by him. We therefore say: "Better have no opinions of the gods at all than such as cast discredit upon them."

CHARLES WATTS.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

THE PAULINE EPISTLES *v.* THE ACTS.

We are often told by Christian apologists that the four great Pauline Epistles are admitted by all critics to be authentic documents; and this fact, it is then contended, adds confirmation to the credibility of the events narrated in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Thus, the Very Rev. the Dean of Canterbury, after stating that "the genuineness of four at least of St. Paul's epistles is undisputed and indisputable," goes on to say:—

"We may start with the unchallenged certainty that respecting the Person and Resurrection of our Lord we possess the contemporary evidence of men who desired to know the truth, who had ample opportunities of ascertaining it, who were intellectually incapable of having imagined, morally incapable of having invented it."

That the Gospel writers neither imagined nor invented "the truth" I cheerfully concede. The Rev. Dean, however, probably means that, if we admit the four great Pauline Epistles (*i.e.*, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians) to be authentic, it will result therefrom that the Gospels were written by men who were contemporary with the events recorded in those books, and that the Gospel writers were "intellectually incapable of having imagined" those events, and "morally incapable of having invented" them. It is scarcely necessary to say that such astonishing results do *not* follow from such an admission.

But, assuming for a moment that the Gospels were written by men who lived in apostolic times, what do we know of the intellectual or moral qualities of the writers? We know nothing whatever, except what we are able to

infer from the contents of the books themselves. Dean Farrar's assertions are simply baseless assumptions.

Are we, for instance, to take it as a proof of the great intellectuality possessed by Matthew, Mark, and Luke that these three writers believed convulsions and epileptic fits to be caused by invisible demons who had entered into the bodies of those who were subject to such maladies? And are we to consider it a proof of the exalted morality of these historians that they all three fraudulently represent Jesus as actually expelling the imaginary evil spirits? Are we to regard it as a mark of the high intelligence possessed by Jude that that pious apostle believed all the insane nonsense in the lying book of Enoch, and quoted it as Scripture (Jude 14, 15)? Are we, again, to consider it a sign of the possession of a great intellect by Peter that that credulous apostle believed that Jesus, during the time his body lay in the tomb, descended in the spirit into Hades, and preached to the spirits of the Old Testament heroes whom he found imprisoned there (1 Peter iii. 19; iv. 6), precisely as narrated in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus? Are we, once more, to regard it as a proof of a high moral nature in the writer of the Third Gospel that that compiler has, for the praise and glory of God, dishonestly placed the speeches composed by himself in the mouths of the *dramatis personæ* in the Acts of the Apostles? The assertions of the Rev. Dean, it will thus be seen, are not merely gratuitous assumptions, but are contradicted by matters in the books themselves.

Next, with regard to the Rev. Apologist's statement respecting the four great Pauline Epistles, I need only say that these epistles are generally admitted to be authentic, but, at the same time, as probably containing some later interpolations. And, such being the case, I will accept them as genuine documents, which have been more or less interpolated. We shall now be able to see how far this admission affects the credibility of the Acts and the Gospels.

And, first, it may not be out of place to show by an example that these epistles *have* been interpolated. For this purpose I will read 2 Cor. xi. 30, 31 and xii. 1 consecutively. In these verses Paul says:—

"If I *must needs glory*, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness. The God and father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.....I *must needs glory*, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord."

Now, that these verses form one undivided paragraph there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. Yet, in the middle of the paragraph, some pious interpolator has inserted the following two verses:—

"In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes, in order to take me: and through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands" (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33).

This passage was inserted to confirm the statements made respecting Paul in the following paragraph in the Acts:—

"And he was certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God.....and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ. And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him..... And they watched the gates also day and night.....but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket. And when he was come to Jerusalem.....Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles.....And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord" (ix. 19-29).

Now, in the first place, this paragraph and the interpolated passage are upon one point contradictory. In the first we are told that it was the governor of the city who desired to kill Paul; in the other, that it was "the Jews"—a despised people who formed but a small portion of its inhabitants, and who could have no influence with the governor. In the next place, the interpolated passage gives a date about a century before the time when Christ is alleged to have appeared in Palestine as a teacher—*viz.*, when Aretas, king of Arabia, was made king of Damascus. It can be shown that no other Aretas, though several Arabian kings bore that name, held dominion—at least, up to apostolic times—over that city.

But that the whole paragraph in the Acts is a fabrication is conclusively proved by one of the epistles whose

authenticity I have just admitted—viz., that written to the Galatians. In this epistle Paul, having heard that his authority as a preacher and an apostle had been questioned, asserts his right to both, as well as his complete independence of the apostolic party at Jerusalem. He says (Gal. i. 11-20) :—

“For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but through revelation of Jesus Christ..... But when it was the good pleasure of God..... to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother. Now, touching the things which I write unto you, behold before God I lie not.”

Well, if Paul has not lied here, then assuredly the writer of the Acts has; for he says that Paul *was* taught of men, and *did* confer with flesh and blood; that he was “certain days” with the Christians of Damascus before he began to teach; that Paul *did* go up to Jerusalem, and there fraternized with the Apostles, and “was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.” These statements, as we have seen, Paul categorically denies. Hence, taking Paul's account as true, we have no alternative but to set down that in the Acts as fictitious. Hence, also, the writer of the Third Gospel—who, according to the apologist Farrar, was incapable of imagining or inventing any of the matters he has recorded—is clearly convicted of both offences.

But Luke has done far more than merely fabricate the circumstances mentioned. He has, throughout the whole of his account of the ministry of Paul, systematically misrepresented that apostle. The picture which he draws of Paul and the early Church in the Acts is in direct contradiction to that revealed in the Pauline Epistles. In the Acts Paul is in perfect harmony with the Apostolic party, and is, in everything, completely subordinate to the Church at Jerusalem, the work, motives, and aims of both being identical. There is, at all times, throughout this fictitious history, perfect unanimity between Paul and the Apostles, the latter aiding the great Gentile teacher by all means in their power. Paul also, according to this narrative, invariably addressed his teaching to the Jews, and only turned to the Gentiles when the former rejected him.

But, according to Paul's epistles, there was the widest divergence between the two parties. The Apostles, with Jewish exclusiveness, confined their ministrations to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Instead of assisting Paul in his labor among the Gentiles, they did all they could to hinder him and counteract his work, and even sent agents among his converts, deliberately misrepresenting him and his teaching. The Apostles preached one gospel; Paul another. Paul also uniformly addressed his “good news” to Gentiles. In short, in the four authentic Pauline Epistles “we see a solitary champion fighting, single-handed, a battle with a compact phalanx which looks upon him as little better than a seducer and a traitor.” In other words, the “history” in the Acts, as far as it relates to Paul, is nothing but pure fiction.

What, now, are we to say of Luke? And how does this matter affect the credibility of the Third Gospel? A large portion of the latter Gospel was, we know, compiled from documents which were also used by Matthew and Mark. This portion will, of course, remain unaffected. But there are many circumstances which are mentioned only by Luke. Among these are: The events connected with the birth of Christ (i. ii.); the child Jesus in the temple with the “doctors” (ii. 39-52); the miraculous draught of fishes (v.); the restoration to life of the widow's son at Nain (vii.); the healing of an infirm woman, a dropsical man, and ten lepers (xiii., xiv., xvii.); the penitent thief at the Crucifixion (xxiii. 40-44); the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Rich Man and Lazarus (x., xv., xvi.). These matters, resting upon the unsupported statements of a man convicted of lying for the glory of God and the advancement of his religion, may be set down as wholesale fabrications, or, at the very least, as narratives so tainted with suspicion that no one but a Christian apologist can be expected to believe them. The first result, then, of

admitting the genuineness of the four great Pauline Epistles is to completely discredit the Acts of the Apostles and a portion of the Third Gospel.

ABRACADABRA.

IGNATIUS v. CANTAUER.

SOME weeks ago, in the columns of the *Freethinker*, Father Ignatius attacked the Archbishop-Designate of Canterbury and, I think, Canon Fremantle—I write from memory, and am not sure of names—for remaining within the Church as by law established, and receiving salaries from the said Church, while at the same time holding and teaching doctrines not held by the Church, or omitting to hold and to teach doctrines which should be held and taught by certain of that Church's officials—the clergy, great and small, to wit. Father Ignatius appears to hold the opinion that men who do not believe all the Church has ever believed have no right to remain in the Church, or to suck their carnal sustenance at the breasts of the *Mater Fidelium*. Now, whether Father Ignatius's view is sound or not is, I think, of great importance to Free-thinkers, who advocate the disendowment of the State Church; but what shall occupy us here is the undoubted evidences of evolution supplied by the history, as we know it, of the Church of England, and even—*longo intervallo*—by the Church of Rome, that *Mater Sanguines* whose most illustrious victim looks down from his statue on the Campo dei Fiori on the once Pagan and then Papal city, on the blood-stained, hate-wrinkled hag that erstwhile dubbed herself the Holy Mother Church, and was by others of her children, who knew her character better, styled the Scarlet Whore of Babylon—or, as we know her, the murderess of Bruno and Vanini. The evolution is not, perhaps, as yet one in the direction of honesty; the cunning augurs, while turning from each other whenever they meet, lest they should be compelled to laugh, still pouch the gold, the one god in whom they all do believe so unanimously, even those of them who, together with Father Ignatius, appear to be most backward in the process even of clerical evolution. They, while not yet having denuded their particular God of all human attributes, have, nevertheless, denuded their religion of some of its blood-stained and filth-saturated rags of doctrine—*e.g.*, the duty of burning “heretics,” of drowning or burning “witches,” of damning to an everlasting hell “children but a span long,” together with all the uncountable myriads of human beings whose misfortune it was never to have heard of the legend of the Christian's God, who created an idiotic heaven and a barbarian's hell, and all that therein are or were or ever will be, “world without end”—*i.e.*, an eternal world. Amen.

In addition to these rejected—or shall we say suppressed?—beliefs, those connected with Father Ignatius no longer profess to believe that the world is flat, or that the sun is a satellite of our tiny spherule, or that the earth is but 6,000 years old, as the lying catechisms only a few years ago were still teaching; they no longer believe that there is a personal Devil, who is managing director of their God's brimstone works, and general obtainer of souls and bodies, wherewith the “sulphurous flames” are to be for ever fed, and wherein the undying worm shall for ever feed, notwithstanding the dolorous indigestions arising out of its unremitting gourmandize. “Poor worm,” I am (as Uncle Toby and Bobbie Burns said of auld Nickie Ben) “wae tae think upon yon den, even for your sake.” I will not multiply examples further showing how great a section of the Church's poisonous load of belief, even the least evolved of Father Ignatius's fellows, appear to have been thrown into the ditch by the wayside of their intellectual pilgrimago. The Father can either refute my charge on these points, or he cannot. If he can, it were useless to put forward additional examples. If, as I suggest is the case, he cannot refute those already given, it were a work of supererogation to produce more.

Having, then, apparently got rid of all the beliefs before mentioned, have these ingenious hunters of heretical big game refused to “pouch the gold” left to the Church by those pious (!) benefactors who did believe in these things, and left their monies, or lands, or goods and chattels to the Church on account of their belief, and also for the everlasting propagation of it? “Nary cent!” as Artemus Ward would have answered. Why, even so late as five

years ago the clergy had been receiving and misappropriating a legacy left some four or five centuries ago for the purpose of providing wood, stake, chains, and all incidental expenses connected with the burning of heretics—a pious legacy which enabled the Church to give a free entertainment in public to thousands of its sons and daughters. The heretic cost nothing but the catching; the roasting was gratis, and the show was frenzied and free—more exciting and ten cents apiece cheaper to the spectators than Artemus Ward's waxworks of Daniel and the lions. Yet the Church has for many generations ceased to give the bloody outdoor holiday so thoughtfully provided for by its deceased son; and a few years ago this hell-hot legacy was diverted to the purposes of education. So, in England and elsewhere, legacies intended by the testators to promote those beliefs in which even the Ignatians have ceased to believe were common, and naturally so, for many of the testators actually believed these things themselves, and the greater part of the Church's income is made up of monies received from bequests left by people who were ten times as credulous as the most atavistic priest or presbyter living to-day.

My conclusion, then, is that, unless "Father Ignatius" and his co-heresy-hunters carry out the old bequests, and teach the wretched bigoted or barbarous beliefs of those who left these monies to the Church, he and his have no right to a penny of money derived from such sources, are nothing less than vulgar swindlers who obtain money by false pretences, and have no more right to harry the Archbishop-Designate of Canterbury and those whose views are similar to his than a little thief has to pretend to correct a big one. In the view of Freethinkers like myself, there is no pin to choose between Temple and Ignatius on the score of honesty, although we should easily choose on the score of intelligence. Neither can honestly receive their salaries from monies left by men whose belief was as different from theirs as was the belief of these men from that we may suppose to be held by a decent chimpanzee, if the chimpanzee will not be offended at the comparison. Nor need we labor this point any further, for it is clear enough to the wayfaring man that, if the clergy have no right to the greater part of the income they receive, such income has only one proper destination—*i.e.*, the pocket of the nation, and only one proper object—*i.e.*, its utilization for some general good, on which all of us, even clergymen, are agreed.

SIRIUS.

P.S.—A few hours after writing the foregoing I came across a report in to-day's paper (November 30) of a case which I cannot forbear quoting. A Mrs. Robinson left, a few years ago, a sum of money to a church at Boscombe, under certain conditions. These conditions being fulfilled, the interest on her legacy was to be paid to the incumbent, he previously having signed an agreement to observe the conditions attached to the legacy, among which was one that he should wear a black gown in the pulpit—O shade of Rabelais, what huge laughter must be thine! Now, the incumbent—the Rev. Selwyn—would neither sign the agreement nor wear the black; but he had no conscientious objection to receiving the money, and, indeed, took practical steps, in the shape of a legal action, to obtain the said money. Justice North decided against Selwyn; whereupon his love for the law—notwithstanding the apostle's warning—was so great that he went to appeal, and Justice Smith has confirmed Justice North's decision. Here is an instance up to date showing how keen the clergy are after the money left by legatees, and how reckless or indifferent they are to conforming to the conditions under which alone is the money properly receivable. The early Christian Churches robbed, or annexed, the old Pagan temples, property, and endowments—to say nothing of a good stock of Pagan ideas; the Reformed Church took over all it could get of the Papist property and endowments; and the Theistic Church, when it arrives, will take over the goods and effects of the Reformed Church. So one Church, or one set of priests, robs another—and the money comes good to all alike! The sole claim of the clergy to old or new endowments rests on their propagating and professing old or new superstitions. They can never substantiate this claim, for they can never, in the face of the theory of evolution and the facts of every-day life, prove that any educated Englishman to-day can possibly hold the grosser beliefs of even quite recent times.—S.

ACID DROPS.

As "Sirius" notes, the elevation of Dr. Temple has made the orthodox party more anxious than ever to remove the heretics. The St. James's Hall meeting was, however, next door to a fiasco, and the *Daily Chronicle* has printed, and called attention to, letters from the Rev. J. P. Hopps on "Heretics in High Places," showing that Archdeacon Wilson and Canon Gore have literally been hewing up the old orthodoxy by the roots.

The Nonconformists have been holding a Conference on the Education Question. They see trouble before them, and we cannot say we are sorry. On the good old principle that the State has nothing to do with the teaching of religion, they succeeded in abolishing Church rates. They deserted their principle when they saw that rates might be obtained for teaching what is virtually Nonconformist religion, and now that Churchmen and Catholics are also determined to dip into Bull's pockets, they cry out. As the only thing to drive them back to principle is to feel the heel of the Church on their own necks, we listen to their howls with similar equanimity to that they have displayed at the disabilities of Freethinkers.

We hold that rates in aid of religious teaching in any schools, whether Board schools or denominational ones, are worse than Church rates, because it is more reprehensible to impose dogmas on the plastic minds of children than on the maturer minds of adults. When the Nonconformists see that secular education is the true solution of the religious difficulty, we shall accord them both our sympathy and support. Meantime shilly-shallying tactics will not frighten the common enemy—clericalism.

Despite Mr. H. P. Hughes, the Nonconformists may yet be driven to the secular program. Drs. Parker and Clifford induced them to pass a resolution demanding "the separation of elementary education from clerical control in all schools aided by the State, the abolition of all sectarian and ecclesiastical tests now imposed on teachers in State-supported sectarian schools, and the removal of all extraneous tasks now required of teachers in such schools." Let the Nonconformists revert to principle, and the clericals will yet find trouble before them.

In an ancient Greek fable we are told of an old woman who sits at the gate of life presenting to all who enter a cup which diffuses through every vein a subtle poison that will cling to them for the rest of their days. The old dame, in our interpretation, is religion, which gets hold of the mind of the child while yet unable to reason, and so indoctrinates it with the belief in its mysteries and dogmas that the sound food of reason is forever saturated by the poison, unless it can be purged by a drastic dose of ridicule.

The Prince of Wales evidently does not heed the Catholic stories that Freemasonry leads up to devil-worship, since he has again accepted the headship of the body in England, where Freemasonry is almost congested with its own extreme respectability. The philanthropy of the brethren of the mystic tie towards those of their own craft is unquestionable, but we fear most of them do not recognize how far their principles should lead them beyond the mere giving of charity and partaking of good dinners. In their exclusion of women the English Freemasons are hopelessly behind the age; and if the Palladists, as St. Leo Taxil says, have thousands of female members, they are in that respect so much ahead of orthodox Masonry.

Evidently the Anglican Church, too, does not believe in the devil-worship theory, if we may judge by the fact that St. Catherine's Church, Hatcham, was given up for a special Masonic service to commemorate the long reign of the Queen. Four hundred Masons attended, and sent a congratulatory telegram to her Majesty, who, in return, "thanked the vicar and his brother Masons." No mason was caught in the act of attempting to surreptitiously perform the black mass.

By the way, though the semi-mythical Diana Vaughan says that the devil who appeared to her in the Palladist Lodge at Charleston, in 1889, resembled a very handsome young man, the eminent Jesuit, Father Garasse, declares he is of unparalleled ugliness, and that the most deformed of earthly beings are handsomer than the best-looking devil in hell. But holy Scripture assures us that the Devil can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14). The full theological weight of this is realized when we reflect that all the recorded appearances of angels may have been only his sable majesty clad in his best garments.

A devil, if you happen to keep one and put him to use, is

apt to be a very inconvenient personage. Most people keep one, but put him to no use. They believe that he tempted Jesus, but think themselves superior to his temptations. They believe that he took the form of a serpent to deceive Eve, but refuse to credit that he ever takes the form of a cat to assist witches. Satan, in short, is superannuated.

Irrational Broad Church Rationalists assure us Satan is only an allegory. But they will not admit that all the angels, so often referred to in the Bible, were also allegories, or that Satan's divine antagonist is only an allegory. Yet that he is so might be suspected from his masculinity. Be sure, if the New Woman had invented theology, we should have had, instead of God the Father and God the Son, Goddess the Mother and Goddess the Daughter, while even the Holy Ghost would have been feminine, as, indeed, it is according to the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

Mrs. Louisa Lawson, the mother of Henry Lawson—the Australian poet, not the motor financier—edits the *Dawn*, a woman's paper, written, printed, and published by women. She is evidently an advanced woman all round, for she said to the editor of the *Bulletin*: "Why, a woman can't bear a child without it being received into the hands of a male doctor; it is baptized by a fat old male parson: a girl goes through life obeying laws made by men; and if she breaks them, a male magistrate sends her to a gaol. If she gets so far as to be hanged, a male hangman puts the rope round her neck; she is buried by a male gravedigger; and she goes to a heaven ruled over by a male God, or a hell managed by a male Devil. Isn't it a wonder men didn't make the devil a woman?"

M. Domenico Margiotta, an ex-Mason and collaborator of M. Pagès, otherwise St. Leo Taxil, has "blown the gaff" on the last-named "gentleman," and makes out that the whole business of Luciferism is an organized clerical conspiracy against Freemasonry. He says that Diana Vaughan is Taxil; Taxil is an accomplice also in the imposture of M. Hacke, otherwise Dr. Bataille, author of *Le Diable au XIXe Siècle*. At the same time, Mr. C. C. Massey shows, in the *Tablet*, that the statements of the alleged Diana concerning her own ancestry are absolutely fraudulent.

We commend to the notice of *Light* what the *Catholic Review* has to say of Spiritualism. It observes: "The fourth annual Convention of the National Spiritualists' Association of the United States and Canada was held on three days of the past week at Washington, D.C. Among the delegates were a number of Freethinkers, men and women, and a bust of Thomas Payne (!) was set before the President's desk. This union of Spiritism and Atheism is proper, because Spiritism denies the existence of the Triune God of Christianity, denies the divinity of Jesus Christ, denies the truth of the Christian Revelation, denies the facts of heaven and hell. It subjects its believers to the deceptions of Satan. Its spirits are not the ghosts of the dead, but the wicked angels of the Devil. Its distinctive doctrines are falsehoods, its disclosures are misleading, and its influence is evil. Its victims are usually a prey to impurity, doubt, spiritual darkness, melancholy, and despair. It comes from Hell, and it is certain to return to that pit of perdition."

The *Catholic Review* says: "The very chronology of Freemasonry is a denial of Christianity; for instance, we have a Masonic address to our Lord Mayor (of Dublin) dated, not Anno Domini, 1876, but Anno Lucis, 5876."

The Rev. Charles A. Mott, Baptist, was a guest at the house of Andrew Larison, of Lambertville, N.J., on the night of November 8. An alarm of fire called Larison from his bed, and in his absence the minister attempted to assault Mrs. Larison. Mott has been dismissed from his charge by the board of deacons, and a warrant is out for his arrest. Other women have volunteered complaints against him of similar conduct. His whereabouts are not known.

What is to be done about the fearful evil of church bazaars, which are such pitfalls in the paths of youths? Yet another soul dragged down to the abyss of peculation appeared before the Melbourne City Court last week, his native innocence soiled by the wiles of the Church.

Gould, sentenced to four years' hard at Adelaide for embezzlement, was a local preacher, and, until lately, a prominent M.P. Since the memorable convictions of the historic Crooks and a certain Y.M.C.A. secretary, local preachers have rarely been trusted with cash in Adelaide. Gould, however, was so exceptionally pious that they "chanced him"; but he, like the others, preferred the Broad Road, and fell gloriously to the tune of £1,000 odd. Verily, dear friends, the road to Adelaide Gaol is paved with local preachers.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Sarah O'Keefe, fifteen, charged at Sydney with vagrancy,

was sent to the Industrial School. The police took her from a Chinese den some time ago, but she always went back. Her mother had thirteen children, and couldn't control her. And female missionaries continue going to China!

At a meeting in connection with the Church of Scotland Foreign Mission, held in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, it was boasted that £18,000 a year was raised for foreign missions. The question whether the money might not be better spent in the wynds of Glasgow was not mooted.

Lord Reay extolled the medical mission "because it enabled the missionary to obtain a footing in the people's homes." This looking after the extension of Christianity, while apparently only concerned with physical health, seems a good deal like its introduction under false pretences.

Bishop Wilson, of the South Seas, emphatically declares that Bishop Patterson, "the Melanesian martyr," was murdered at Nugaga, not for religion at all, but because the natives there took him to be one of the white men who had some time previously kidnapped certain of their tribe for work on Queensland sugar plantations.

At the entrance to Buddhist temples in Japan stand two huge figures of ferocious appearances. Their office is to guard the sacred precincts from the approach of evil spirits. These images are commonly seen spotted all over with pellets of paper. "A worshipper writes his petition on paper, or, better still, has it written for him by the priest; chews it to a pulp, and spits it at the divinity. If, having been well aimed, the paper sticks, it is a good omen."

There are a variety of curious customs connected with spitting, many of which are mentioned by Mr. Wheeler in his *Footsteps of the Past* (pp. 108-9). He illustrates the story of the clay and spittle used by Jesus, from a number of savage and barbarous customs.

One of the most curious of saliva superstitions is its use as a kind of baptism. Mr. Hartland, in his *Legend of Perseus*, tells us that, at the reception held by an Osmanli mother after childbirth, every visitor who looks at the babe is expected to spit on it. This was a warding off of witchcraft. In the Roman ritual, as Mr. Wheeler remarks, "the priest exorcises the infant's ears and nostrils with spittle before baptizing it." This bears out the statement that the spittle used by Jesus to cure the blind represented virtue that went out of the holy person.

Butler well says:—

There is nothing so absurd or vain,
Or barbarous, or inhumane,
But if it make the least pretence
To piety and godliness,
And zeal for gospel-truth profess,
Does sacred instantly commence.

As a means of attracting the young men of the town, the experiment of employing pretty young women as pew openers is being tried in one of the largest churches in the States. They might have gone a little further, and introduced a bar.

The *Crescent* of November 25 gives the names of five converts to Islam made in Liverpool in the month of November alone. It is doubtful if as many Moslems were converted to Christianity throughout the entire world.

The *Sydney Bulletin* cites from the *Daily Telegraph* of that city the following instance of the efficacy of prayer: "FERNITH, Sunday.—Special prayers for rain were offered in St. Stephen's Church of England to-day. Large bush fires have broken out in the ranges around Glenbrook and Emu Plains." The message evidently miscarried.

An instance of the secular character of Government may be found in our Roman Catholic Lord Chief-Justice Russell being called upon to decide the question of the legality of the black gown as the preaching vestment in the Church of England. The case, in the first instance, came before Judge North, another Catholic, who tried it alone, while Lord Russell took two assessors with him.

Dr. Thackeray says there are six thousand unemployed clergy; but the *English Churchman* considers this "surely a serious exaggeration." Anyway, there is no scheme of Church Reform likely to provide employment for all, and the Church should take into its serious consideration the opening up of avenues of honest employment.

The Bishop of Hereford having spoken against "smart young ladies in waistcoats, and so on," *Punch* observes that Miss Middlecrust is of opinion that this attack comes with a very bad grace from a smart, middle-aged man who attires

himself in "lawn sleeves," an "apron," and "so on," and she would like to know his feelings on that subject.

The *Catholic Review* says: "The utter impotency of Protestantism to convert pagan countries to Christianity is most strikingly indicated by the experience of England in India. For a hundred years England has had control in India, with the invariable result of Protestantism in all heathen countries—that is, the enlightening of the people and removing the moral restraints imposed upon them by their own religions, without substituting the moral restraints of Christianity." For Catholics, with their teaching of absolutism, to talk of moral restraint is rather rich.

At Rosscarberry, Ireland, Father Hill, the parish priest, wants more money from his flock for the support of his church schools and convent, and, to help him, the Bishop of Ross preached for him. According to the report in the *Southern Star*, the Bishop said "he expected there would not be even one person in the parish who would fail in contributing their share, and on the occasion of his next visit he would ask Father Hill for the names of all defaulters; but he sincerely hoped to find none." He did not say they would be excommunicated; but even a little threat like this will probably be sufficient to make everyone in the parish give "a free-will offering."

The *American Catholic Quarterly Review* says: "It would hardly be too much to say that London is a city without a religion." It, however, contrives to get on pretty well without. Of its church-goers the *Review* says: "A curious indefiniteness befores their religious sense"; while there is a yet vaster body who do not go to church at all. The writer looks forward to the conversion of London by Catholic processions, and the lectures delivered by Catholics in Hyde Park!

The Catholic, Dr. Barry, says in the *Catholic Times*: "If we use our intellect as we ought, we shall arrive at a knowledge of the soul's immortality, of the moral law, of the existence of God, and of the judgment to come." "As we ought" probably means according to the instruction of the priest.

Dr. Barry goes on to say: "Matter and force cannot account for Christ; then Materialism is false. But in the same moment that Jesus of Nazareth—this central figure in all history—refutes the Materialist, He makes an end of the Agnostic. For His example, taken as a matter of fact, lays open another spiritual world, of which He is the pledge and the instance. He is a reality beyond the mere visible; and in knowing Him we learn what is the nature of the invisible." What nonsense this all is, in face of the evidence that Jesus Christ is but one of many expressions of the religious ideal.

The Bishop of Truro has written a preface to Wilson Barrett's novel founded on his play, *The Sign of the Cross*. Of course, he praises the playwright who caters for the religious public. We wonder if he will also endorse Mrs. Brown Potter, who intends to appear as the naughty Mrs. Potiphar, and Kyrle Bellew as the unresponsive Joseph, in a religious play called *Joseph of Canaan*.

Mr. Barrett and Mrs. Potter understand the public they are seeking to draw, and who, as Max Nordau says, when *blasé* with everything else, will go and shed tears at the Oberammergau Passion Play. Mr. Allen Dale, in an article entitled "The Bible Seized upon as a Cloak for Immoral Plays," says of the actress: "I can imagine I can hear her with the interviewer. 'Why, my good man,' says Cora, 'surely you cannot accuse me of pandering to a prurient taste. I am giving you Bible history undiluted. I have always loved the Bible, and that is why I select one of its stories with which to educate the public. People will not read the Bible to-day, so I long to bring it home to them—to flaunt it in their faces on the stage. If you say Mrs. Potiphar is improper, you are libelling the Book of Books.'"

This is precisely the logic that she will use, and, in a way, it is the logic that will be allowed to settle the suggestive scene between Mercia and Marcus in *The Sign of the Cross*. The excuse for this episode, of course, is—a desire to show the influence of the cross on rampant sexuality. Mercia is saved from Marcus by holding up the sacred symbol. The public gets all the naughtiness it wants in the guise of sanctimoniousness.

Wilson Barrett thoroughly understood the oddity of the times when he wrote *The Sign of the Cross*. He has furnished a "popular" play, and has carefully avoided everything classical, all poetic language, and all lofty sentiment. If *The Sign of the Cross* had been done up in Shakespearean form, it would have died months ago. As it is, it invites people to come and see an easily intelligible usual play, dressed up in religious clothes.

Mr. Mody desired to place on a tombstone on the grave of Mrs. Mody, who recently was buried at Westleigh Churchyard, Westward Ho, North Devon, an inscription with the words, "Thirza Mody, born ——. Born again at Barnet, June 21, 1863." The incumbent, the Rev. N. Germon, objected, on the ground that this was heretical, inasmuch as it did not recognise baptism as essential to re-birth. At a Consistory Court, held at Exeter, the Chancellor, Mr. Dibdin, held that Mr. Mody could put what he liked on his tombstone, so long as it was not distinctively erroneous teaching, indecent, unbecoming, or untrue. If all untruths were erased from tombstones, there might be some disfigurement.

If the Rev. N. Germon is right, Mrs. Mody was born again on the day she was baptized. Her conversion at Barnet was a third-birth. After this, re-incarnation should present little difficulty.

Aberdeen has been building the sepulchre of one of its stoned prophets. It turned Dr. W. Robertson Smith out of the Free Kirk Professorship for heresy, and now it accepts from Dr. Walter C. Smith, another heretic, a memorial portrait of the rejected one. Time tells, and the heresy of one age becomes the orthodoxy of the next.

An Abingdon clergyman has signaled himself by refusing to marry a young lady because she had not been christened. If all were as strict, the far more private and preferable custom of marriage by registrar would soon grow in favor.

The *New York Observer* says: "Among the advanced critics consistency of thought is compelling the recognition of the fact that the authoritative standing of the Old Testament cannot be maintained in the presence of advanced critical methods and teachings. Not a few of these critics, probably more consistent than the rest, now declare against the Old Testament as a basis of Christian doctrine, and seek to divorce the Christian system from the pre-Christian literature of Israel." Consistency of thought should at the same time compel them to acknowledge that Jesus was mistaken in endorsing the claims of Moses and Daniel, and in backing up the tale of Jonah and the whale.

Moody is conducting a revival in New York on the good old-fashioned lines. He said belief in Balaam's talking ass, and in the swallowing of Jonah by the whale, were essentials of the Christian faith. He believed God could make a fish big enough to swallow Cooper Union—which is a somewhat different thing from saying the building was swallowed by a fish.

Someone sends us, pasted on a card, an advertisement which has long been inserted in various papers by the Rev. W. Darlow Sargeant, addressed to "Persons in Spiritual Difficulties." We, however, have none; perhaps because we never indulge in spirits of any kind.

A French specialist journal, *L'Anthropologie*, has an account of tailed men in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. M. Paul d'Enjoy met with them between latitude 11 and 12 degrees, and longitude 104 and 106 degrees. One is spoken of as using the feet in climbing, like a monkey. They have strongly accentuated ankle-bone as well as a caudal appendage. The other tribes destroy them mercilessly when they have an opportunity.

Although Mr. Ellison Voysey is disclaimed by the orthodox Unitarians because, when asked, "Are you a Christian?" he replied "No," he during October did temporary duty in a Unitarian church at Yarmouth, and has since been similarly occupied at Leicester. If fit for such positions temporarily, surely he is fit to fill them permanently. Despite the Rev. Mr. Spears and *Christian Strife*, the trend of Unitarianism is away from anything that can be called distinctively Christianity.

The *Christian Leader*, of Glasgow, says that the census which it took of church attendance in that city shows a decrease which is "simply alarming" when contrasted with that of ten years ago.

From the *Spectator*:—"Verger (to lady visitor, pointing out his colleague): 'That is the other Verger, mum.' Lady: 'I thought the church had only one Verger.' Verger: 'No, mum; he werges up one side, mum, and I werge up the other.'"

Everywhere we find the rule to hold good, "Like people, like gods." The gods cannot be better than the people who make and who worship them. And as all these gods were the product of men or of people in their earlier, more ignorant, crude, and brutal state, it is but reasonable to expect that the gods, creeds, and religious systems of any people will be found inferior in character, more crude, brutal, and irrational than the people themselves.—*M. Harman.*

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LETTERS for the *Freethinker* must be addressed to the Editor or Mr. Wheeler. Letters addressed to Mr. Foote will await his return from America.

H. GOUGH.—Among lost books of the Bible are the Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. xxi. 14), the Book of Jasher (Josh. x. 13, 2 Sam. i. 18), the Book of the Constitution (1 Sam. x. 25), the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 41), the Book of Nathan the Prophet and the Book of Gad the Seer (1 Chron. xxix. 29, 2 Chron. ix. 29), the Book of Shenaiah the Prophet (2 Chron. xii. 15), etc. In the New Testament Luke i. 1 refers to "many" evangelists, and Paul (1 Col. iv. 16) to an epistle from Laodicea.

J. TURNER.—The name of Miss Voltairine de Cleyre is familiar to us from her writings in the American press, and if, as you say, she is coming to England for the benefit of her health, Free-thinkers will doubtless be pleased to hear her lecture.

D. K.—Will find an odd corner somewhere.

ANTI-CLERICUS.—Your verses on the Parson run smoothly, but are a trifle commonplace. Try again.

G. CRUDDAS.—See Sugar Plums. Pleased to hear you are doing your level best.

R. SHEFFIELD.—Most of Mr. Bradlaugh's old debates are out of print. We have handed your letter to Mr. Forder.

A LOVER OF THE TRUTH.—Mr. Foote's *Philosophy of Secularism*, price 3s.; Mr. Holyoake's *Principles of Secularism*, 3s., and his *Origin and Nature of Secularism*, 2s. 6d.

P. WILDE.—A discussion on diet would be a little out of our line. It strikes us that sensible people find out what is best for them, and that it matters more what a man brings out of himself than what he puts in.

J. MCCALLUM.—English's *Grounds of Christianity Examined* is out of print. Newman's *Phases of Faith* and Greg's *Creed of Christendom* may be recommended. Strauss's *Life of Jesus* is published at 7s. 6d.

W. G. ROBERTSON.—Your lines on perfection and happiness have some beauty of expression, but the thought is not put quite plainly enough to hit the average reader. Do not be discouraged, but aim at clearness.

W. S. CLOGG (Victoria Park).—Your last letter arrived on Wednesday, too late to be dealt with. Pleased to hear Mr. Ward had a quiet meeting, and means to continue his lectures in the Park on fine Sundays. You do not say if "the great C.E. lecturer" allows fair discussion. Anyway, if he wants his lectures noticed in our columns, he should at least send us a bill. You are right; a grand revival of Freethought, through Colonel Ingersoll, would fittingly celebrate the sixtieth year of the Queen's reign.

C. CATTELL (Emerson, Pokesdown, Hants) offers to send his *Gems from the Ocean of Truth* at 6d., by post 7½d.

D. MCINTYRE.—The sites of Biblical places are mainly traditional. Golgotha and Calvary are usually regarded as identical. John xix. 17, 18 plainly implies that Jesus was crucified at Golgotha; Luke xxiii. 33 as plainly calls the place Calvary, but no "mount" is mentioned. It was customary for executions to take place outside the city.

A. J. CAMPBELL (Glasgow).—Mr. Forder can supply you with some of the illustrated back numbers, but not with volumes.

AMERICAN FUND.—Per R. Forder: J. G. Cowan, 1s.; W. Cunliffe, 2s.; J. Jones, 5s.

LECTURE SCHEME.—Per R. Forder: J. Jones, 2s. 6d.

SHILLING FUND.—Per R. Forder: J. Jones, 5s.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Anti-Blasphemy Laws, 5s.

W. M.—Always glad of original jokes. Moss-grown wheezes laboriously re-hashed will not suit.

J. PORT.—See "Sacred Seven" in *Bible Studies*.

SWANSEA.—D. T. Snow, 36 Sydney-street, Brynhyfryd, desires all Freethinkers in the district to write to him and state what day would be most convenient for them to meet.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Animal's Friend—Light—Der Arme Teufel—Sydney Bulletin—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Literary Guide—Free Review—Glasgow Herald—New York Public Opinion—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Lucifer—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Open Court—Crescent—Islamic World—Daily Chronicle—Echo—Charleston News.

THE National Secular Society's new office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

OUR next number will contain the conclusion of Mr. Foote's account of the Chicago Congress, with more about Colonel Ingersoll.

When Mr. Putnam was over here last year we copied his letters to the New York *Truthseeker*, and his descriptions of England and English Freethought were of much interest to our readers. In like fashion, the New York *Truthseeker* is now reprinting Mr. Foote's articles as they appear in our columns.

We remind London readers that this Sunday they have an opportunity of hearing Mr. Chilperic Edwards, author of *The Witness of Assyria*, on a subject which he has thoroughly studied and made his own—viz., "The Monuments and the Bible." Mr. Edwards, who has long been known to our readers as "Chilperic," takes the platform for the first time at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30. Mr. Wheeler will be present, and doubtless many other of Chilperic's admirers will like to attend on this occasion.

Mr. A. B. Moss occupied the platform at the Athenæum on Sunday last, and treated his audience to a short recital prior to the lecture. This Sunday he delivers three lectures in St. James's Hall, Bristol, after several years' absence from that city, and we hope our friends there will give him good audiences. He will recite before each lecture.

This Sunday Mr. J. M. Robertson lectures at the Bradlaugh Institute on "The Tory Religion." On the following Thursday a member well known in financial circles will deal with the ever-pressing topic of "Money."

A meeting will be held directly after the lecture at Camberwell, on Sunday, December 13, to consider the advisability of forming a slate club in connection with this Branch, and interested friends are invited to attend.

Mr. Cohen lectures for the Oxhill and Stanley Branches on December 5, 6, and 7. He is well known in that district, and we hope the large, though scattered, population of Freethinkers will rally together and support his meetings.

Mr. H. Snell, who, we regret to hear, has had bad health of late, is lecturing three times this Sunday in the Alexandra Hall, Birmingham. Friends in the district should do their best to make these lectures a success.

A grand concert was held in the Secular Hall at New Brompton on Sunday evening last, and was heartily appreciated by everyone, the musical talent being of the A1 order. This Sunday Mr. Heaford, of London, lectures. His subjects will be found in the Guide Notice.

Members of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch of the N.S.S. are requested to note that a special meeting will be held in the Northumberland Hall on Sunday, December 6, at 8 p.m., to elect a new secretary.

Nya Sannigar, our Swedish Freethought contemporary, gives its readers a portrait and biography of Shelley, whose fame, we are glad to know, is extending on the continent.

Our next number will contain a review of *The True Life of Captain Sir R. F. Burton*, by his niece, Georgiana M. Stisted. As we suspected, his devoted Roman Catholic wife not only burnt his manuscripts, but put a misleading color over his thoughts.

The December number of the *English Mechanic and World of Science* is as full of good things as an egg is of meat. The letters to the editor, headed by those of A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, are always up to date, and the controversy on matter-spirit and another life, though seemingly interminable, must tend to explode solemn humbug. Among much other matter, Dr. Aveling continues his Lectures on Zoology; and there is an exposure of how spirit manifestations are produced. But to enumerate the contents of one number of the *E. M.* would need more space than we can afford.

No. 5 of Mr. J. M. Robertson's "Papers for the People" is entitled *Saving and Waste*. Mr. Robertson's views on this subject are not exactly those of orthodox economists, but they are well thought out and clearly expressed. The entire series can be obtained from Mr. R. Forder.

The Peace Society, in calling attention to Peace Sunday, circulates an excellent letter on "Preaching and Fighting," written by Major G. O. Warren for the *Echo*. Mr. Warren points out that it was the recognized leaders of orthodox Christianity who were loudest in shrieking for the blood of the Turk.

The *Free Review*, we should hope, must be gradually gathering a number of supporters who eagerly look forward to its appearance and the excellent original matter in its pages. The December number is full of interest. Mr. J. M. Robertson opens with a criticism of "Stevenson on Burns." Still more interesting to Freethinkers is the following article by Scotus on the British Association. Mr. Geoffrey Mortimer gives a sympathetic account of the veteran Chartist, Julian Harney, now in failing health; and Ernest Newman defends Wagner from the criticism of Nietzsche. "The Bread Question," which, as pointed out, would be a terribly pressing one in the event of war, is dealt with by Mr. T. G. Read; and "The Female Factor" by P. C. Spence. There are a good skit entitled "Thank God for W. H. Smith," a dialogue between "The Kirk and the Inn," by T. D. Robb, and some excellent notices of "New Books." Altogether a good number.

A new university is being established in Japan. There will be faculties of law and medicine, but no theology. The Doshisha University at Kyoto has quite severed its connection with the American Japanese Mission. A teacher who is stated to have openly assailed the foundation principles of Christianity within the institution has been promoted by the trustees to be the head of a department.

Funds, toys, and provender of all kinds will be required for the Annual Children's Party, which will take place early in the New Year. Subscriptions should be sent to Miss Vance, 377 Strand, for this commendable purpose, and she will be happy also to send collecting-cards to applicants.

AN OPEN BIBLE.

I AM in receipt of a letter from a prominent Missouri divine, kindly commending the "Iconoclast's" criticisms of the daily press for printing obscene advertisements, reports of unsavory divorce trials, and exploiting breaches of the Seventh Commandment by people of social prominence. My reverend correspondent adds:—

"No book or paper in which are found accounts of seductions, rapes, or brutal murders like those of 'Jack-the-Ripper' should be allowed to come into the home to poison the minds of youth. To such publications I attribute the frightful increase of crime. Children are made familiar with the social evil as soon as they can read, and the result may be seen in the vast army of rouses and prostitutes. It is a fact, universally conceded, that publishing the details of a peculiarly brutal murder breeds imitators."

To all of which I was about to respond with a fervent amen, when the pious exclamation was frozen upon my lips by the following remarkable sentence: "Remember that an open Bible is the hope of the world—a Bible which all may read, interpret for themselves, and mould their lives according to its sacred precepts." I much dislike to criticise a brother minister; but it occurs to me that he is not consistent—that he strains at a diatom, and swallows a whole drove of dromedaries. If it be true that publication of brutal murders breeds imitators, who can estimate the influence on our criminal annals of the "Open Bible"? The scholar, the discriminating critic, may gather from Judea's bloody fields golden Apples of Hesperides, while the ignorant find only thorns and thistles to their hurt. The Bible may be said to begin with a homicide and end with a holocaust; yet my correspondent expects its general perusal to eliminate crime!

If he will turn again to the book which he would place in the hands of innocent childhood, he will find it rank from imprimis to finis with accounts of sexual sins which even so enterprising a sensation-monger as the modern daily would scarce dare put in print. In this country men who inscribed Biblical verses on postal cards have been imprisoned for sending obscene matter through the mails; yet my reverend friend insists that what is too feculent for the postal service should be given to women and children as the word of God! According to the Biblical historiographers, fornication is but a venial fault and usually forgiven—a mere pastime for the beloved of the Lord, who escape punishment without the trouble of repentance; while rape, incest, onanism, and sodomy tumble over the pages of this popular book as in some wild phallic revel or Devil's dream. Lot, the nephew of Abraham, supplied the Biblical reporters with a racy narrative surpassing anything yet attributed to the Vanderbilts or Marlboroughs, and the details are worked up in a manner that would satisfy even

the editor of the *Sunday Slumgullion*. The scribe even added to his story a dash of the marvellous by making the old man so drunk on Rev. Bill Homan's non-intoxicating Biblical wine that he despoiled his two daughters unconsciously—thereby surprising the modern Prohibitionists and fairly dumbfounding all students of physiology. If "the unfermented wines of Bible times," of which Brother Bill delights to discourse, have this effect, perhaps we had best pin our faith to bourbon. For the first recorded "scandal in high life" we must come down to the days of David.

The story is very well told in the second volume of Colonel Samuel's great historical novel; but if he worked any particular moral into the narrative, it has been jolted out by a journey extending over ninety generations. The debauchment of the wife of a faithful subject; the attempt to make the unhappy cuckold accept the ill-begotten brat as his own; a score of brutal murders to conceal the kingly crime; a brief attack of the snuffles when upbraided by the prophet—who grants absolution as soon as asked; the side-tracking of Bathsheba for a younger paramour in the king's old age in the vain hope of reviving his power for evil, all told with that Biblical straightforwardness which never calls a spade an excavator's implement, constitutes a story which my ministerial friend would put into the hands of children and half-wits—then supplement it with "The Song of Solomon," the most lascivious dream that ever beguiled foolish girlhood to the grove of Daphne.

If a libidinous book or paper be dangerous to public morals, an incentive to crime, how much more so when the reader is led to believe that its every line bears the sanction of the Lord? I want to see an "Open Bible," but desire that it be a carefully-expurgated edition. I can imagine no nobler service which a learned and devout man could render the Christian cause than to go through the Bible with a blue pencil and a pair of shears. He should make it a Bible which we can afford to "open" on all occasions and at any page—a Bible for the people as well as for the priesthood. He should begin by scissoring out the tiresome repetitions and fake genealogies. He should harpoon Jonah's whale, shoot Elisha and his she-bears, and deprive Eve's serpent and Balaam's ass of the power of speech.

I have several times threatened to undertake this work myself, but received only indifferent encouragement from my brother ministers. They appear to be too busy preaching politics to take much interest in a great religious enterprise—more anxious to elect Bill McKinley than to "capture the world for Christ." Think not that I am attempting coarse sarcasm—Luther himself was never more in earnest. The character of a people is largely molded by what it reads; hence it is not remarkable that an unexpurgated Bible should produce sanctified robbers, canting murderers, and praying prostitutes. It is not strange that religionists should invade the private rights and civic prerogatives of those who dare differ with them, when they read in holy writ that such offenders are deserving of death. When they are led to believe that God's choicest blessings rest upon those guilty of murder, deception, and adultery, is it any wonder that as their religious fervor rises their morality declines? It is worthy of remark that, wherever introduced, the "Open Bible" leaves in its wake the footsteps of the homicide and the pungent odors of the scarlet woman. Of our population of seventy millions but twenty-three millions are church communicants. America is to-day an infidel instead of a Christian country, and the "Open Bible," together with that little learning which is a dangerous thing, have made it so. We must either close our schools, expurgate our Bible, or see Christianity perish.

—*Brann's Iconoclast.*

The superstition of Europe, instead of being diminished, was only turned into a fresh channel. The new religion was corrupted by the old follies. The adoration of idols was succeeded by the adoration of saints; the worship of the Virgin was substituted for the worship of Cybele; Pagan ceremonies were established in Christian churches; not only the mummeries of idolatry, but likewise its doctrines, were quickly added, and were incorporated and worked into the spirit of the new religion; until, after a lapse of a few generations, Christianity exhibited so grotesque and hideous a form that its best features were lost, and the lineaments of its earlier loveliness altogether destroyed.—*H. T. Buckle, "History of Civilization in England,"* v., p. 259.

HELLWARD HINTS.

If you wish to go to hell, believe in science,
And, verily, you'll not be disappointed;
For the principles of science bid defiance
To Jah, the Christian God, and his anointed.

"Uniformity of nature" is the basis,
The necessary postulate of science;
Ev'ry scientist—no matter what the case—
Must place on it an absolute reliance.

"Multiformity of nature" is the basis,
And postulate of Bible superstition;
Ev'ry Christian, thus, who understands the case is
The foe of scientific erudition.

If you wish to go to hell, believe in Logic,
And study all the canons of Induction;
You will then get rid of all that's anagogic,
And fit yourself for sulphurous destruction.

If you wish to go to hell and be with Newton,
Believe his Christless "Law" of Gravitation,
Which disproves, despite the parson's "high falutin'";
Elijah's and the "Savior's" levitation.

If you wish to go to hell, believe that plumb-lines,
Though square to local level, are convergent;
That great-circle routes are not so long as rhumb-lines;
That exorcism's not a good detergent;

That the earth's a spinning spheroid, and that vision
Has never dipped below a spot's horizon;
That it wasn't Jah that started circumcision;
And, also, that a Christian's "hurt" by "pizon."

To believe these facts is clearly to discredit
The teaching and philosophy of Jesus,
Who believed the book that God-the-Ghost did edit,
And thought that devils cause the ills that seize us.

To conceive a *square* ellipse is rather trying
To him that's ruled by logic in his thinking;
But a Christian, all consistency defying,
Can think of one as easily as winking.

The expression "Christian scientist" is clearly
A "*square* ellipse," or even a *square* triangle;
And the party who accepts the name sincerely
Is simply one whose thoughts are in a tangle.

A "scientific Christian" is the creature
Of trimming would-be-Christian up-to-daters;
If his methods squared with Christ's in any feature,
His science would be very "small petaters."

Christians *must* have full belief in Christ their savior;
But those that think he erred are not "believers";
Science *proves* he erred in precept and behavior;
Thus "scientific Christians" are deceivers.

As the Lord believed that madness was "possession,"
And "swallowed" Jonah's tenement cetaceous,
Ev'ry scientist who makes the least profession
Of Christian faith is clearly unveracious.

If you wish to go to hell, throw off your "blinkers"!
Employ your reason, think, and look around you!
If you wish to go to hell with all the thinkers;
But, if you don't, then, go to heav'n! confound you!
G. L. MACKENZIE.

How to Help Us.

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

MISSIONARY WORK IN THE WEST OF SCOTLAND.

FREETHOUGHT propaganda received a much-needed impetus in the West of Scotland by the inauguration of Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, and the work commenced by the Glasgow Branch fully a twelvemonth ago has been steadily carried on, with gratifying results. Mr. Cohen's lecturing tour in this district has just terminated, and it has proved an unqualified success. Beginning with three lectures in Glasgow on Sunday, November 15, it extended until Monday, 23rd ult., when Carluke was visited, and the Gospel of Free-thought was introduced to the people of that town for the first time. Although not in the best of form—being a little indisposed—Mr. Cohen acquitted himself creditably at Glasgow; his replies to a local preacher, who opposed him at the evening lecture, were highly relished by the audience.

On Monday Mr. Cohen proceeded to Dunoon, accompanied by Mr. Black and myself. The subject was "Foreign Missions," and a large audience assembled in the Burgh Hall to listen to the lecture. With the exception of a very stupid question at the close of the lecture, there was no discussion. The clergy, as usual, were conspicuous by their absence; and Mr. Cohen, commenting upon this fact before the meeting closed, boldly challenged any of them to meet him the next time he visited the town. The challenge was heartily applauded, and the meeting, which was quiet and orderly throughout, dispersed in the best of temper. We have fought down bigotry in this town with remarkable success. Since Mr. Cohen's first visit in March, three lectures have been delivered; but the hostile demonstration which occurred at his first meeting has never been repeated. The local papers gave fairly good reports of the lecture, and, altogether, we are very well satisfied with the progress made in this place since the Lecture Scheme was put into operation.

On Tuesday evening Mr. Cohen lectured to a large audience at Paisley. Here, also, the subject was "Foreign Missions"; but there was no opposition. The lecturer was accorded a patient hearing, and he was frequently applauded during the course of the lecture. The Paisley Branch is doing fairly well, and since its resuscitation—which was brought about by the Lecture Scheme—it has not missed an opportunity of spreading the gospel when a favorable chance presented itself.

Next evening (Wednesday) Mr. Cohen visited Greenock. The subject—"The Case Against Christianity"—attracted a large gathering to the Bank-street Hall, despite the fact that two local clergymen had advised their congregations not to attend the meeting. At the conclusion of the lecture there was half-an-hour's animated discussion. One of the Christian opponents distinguished himself by telling a few lies about Charles Bradlaugh, which, however, the majority of the audience laughed at. The next opponent commenced to harangue the meeting in the stereotyped street-corner revival fashion, and he seemed very much aggrieved when I (as chairman) requested him to reserve his biography for a more appreciative audience, and confine his remarks to the subject-matter of the lecture. Before resuming his seat he imparted the astounding information that evolution contradicted the Bible, and anything that disagreed with God's Word must be untrue. It is seldom that one meets such a candid defender of Christianity now-a-days. Some of the other speakers lacked the most elementary ideas of courtesy or good manners, and had to be brought sharply to order. The lecture has provoked a discussion in the *Greenock Telegraph*, and one correspondent, who writes under the *nom de plume* of "Omar Khayyam," contributes a very good letter vindicating Mr. Cohen's position. The discussion in the *Telegraph* is one beneficial result of the lecture, as it is bound to introduce our ideas to a large proportion of the Greenock public.

Mr. Cohen journeyed to Motherwell on Thursday, and discoursed on "Christianity and Slavery." Owing to the inclement nature of the weather, the audience was not quite so large as that which turned out to hear Mr. Foote when he lectured there in September; but, if there was a slight falling off in numbers, there was no diminution of enthusiasm. At the close one gentleman put a few conundrums to the lecturer, one of them being, "What originated knowledge?" but there was no discussion. One Motherwell minister—the Rev. Mr. Rintoul—had been exposing Secularism in his church on the previous Sunday evening; but, of course, it is much easier to expose Secularism from the pulpit than attempt to do it in a manly and straightforward way, face to face with your opponent; and Mr. Rintoul, therefore, did not venture to visit the Town Hall. The Motherwell friends are made of the right stuff, and we are confident that they will yet manage to establish a strong Branch in their midst.

On Sunday Mr. Cohen again turned up smiling at Glasgow, and had the pleasure of speaking at three fine meetings. His forenoon lecture on "Spinoza" was much appreciated by those present, and, before leaving, the hope was freely expressed that he would soon be with us again.

The last lecture of the series was delivered at Carluke on

Monday evening. The Town Hall had been secured for this purpose fully a month before the date of the lecture, but a few days prior to Mr. Cohen's visit we were informed that the subject was not in accordance with the constitution of the hall, and, consequently, we were not to be permitted to occupy the hall. To this a reply was sent, pointing out that the subject was clearly stated when the hall was engaged, and that we should be there on Monday to take possession. And, further, that, should any attempt be made to prevent us from entering the hall, an action for damages would be immediately instituted. The cowardice of the Council, however, was stronger than their bigotry, for this threat had the desired effect, and they promptly climbed down. Five members of the Glasgow Branch accompanied Mr. Cohen, and it was with the utmost difficulty the party succeeded in securing hotel accommodation. We were compelled to report the matter to the police authorities, and eventually four of us were provided with bedrooms; two of the party, Messrs. McGlashan and Train, being obliged to leave before the lecture was finished to catch the last train for Glasgow. Such is the spirit of intolerance and bigotry in godly Carlisle after nearly two thousand years' preaching of the gospel of the meek and lowly Jesus.

After having encountered so much opposition, we naturally expected to have some trouble during the lecture, but we were agreeably disappointed. The audience was a very large one, and Mr. Cohen was listened to attentively throughout his lecture, the subject being "Why I Reject Christianity." Several gentlemen opposed at the finish, but the discussion was of the poorest description. Mr. Black occupied the chair, and the good humor and order that prevailed were in no small degree due to his tact in discharge of that duty. Thus ended the first Freethought lecture in Carlisle. Its success exceeded our most sanguine expectations; and now that we have managed to introduce our movement, we shall follow up our initial success at the earliest opportunity. A pleasing feature was the demand for literature at the close of the meeting, quite a number of young men providing themselves with books, pamphlets, etc. Outside the hall several groups were eagerly discussing the lecture, and we were allowed to proceed to the hotel unmolested.

Altogether Mr. Cohen's tour has been a distinct success, and the Glasgow "saints" are immensely pleased at the progress made since the Lecture Scheme began. There is much hard work still required, still much bigotry and intolerance to beat down, and calumny and misrepresentation to expose; but we believe that in the Lecture Scheme we possess a valuable weapon, capable of accomplishing genuine work for the glorious gospel of Freethought.

THOMAS MACLEISH.

EARTH BURIAL AND CREMATION.

"O Feuergrab, o schöner Brauch!
Des lebens Weh erlangt Genesung,
Denkt sich's die Schauer der Verwesung
Ersparnt nach seinem letzten Hauch."

—HIERONYMUS LORK.

THE old Pagans used to burn their dead, and I have a notion that the practice of earth burial was taken up by the early Christians, not only because they believed in the absurd superstition of the resurrection of the body, but because it assisted the Church in the paying game of having shrines and relics. The bones of saints scattered through Europe would fill a vast museum, and are a source of large revenue.

The question of the disposal of the dead should be considered from the point of view of sanitation, not of superstition. On this ground all sanitary authorities are agreed that the Pagan practice of incineration is the one fraught with least danger to the community. The perils of earth burial, packing churchyards and cemeteries, round which inhabited houses rapidly converge, with putrefying carcases, should be sufficiently obvious. Since, however, the adherence to Christian custom is founded on sentiment, there is one sentiment which deserves to be appealed to on the other side. It is this: In earth burial there is always the possibility of an interment before actual death. This cannot be in cremation. Moreover, in cremation there is no such apparatus of flames, fire, coal, or smoke as is used as bugbear to the imagination. A competent witness testifies that this method is "the most pleasing to the senses, the most charming to the imagination, and the most grateful to the memory."

H. ROLLETT.

A negro revivalist preacher was asked how he got on with his meetings. "First rate," said he; "I made seventy converts the first night."

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE monthly Executive meeting was held at the Society's offices on Thursday, October 29; Mr. Arthur B. Moss in the chair. Present: Messrs. E. Bater, R. Forder, T. Gorniot, W. Heaford, S. Hartmann, F. Schaller, H. J. Stace, J. M. Wheeler, G. J. Warren, A. Brown, P. Sabine, M. Loafer, W. Leat, H. R. Clifton, E. W. Quay, C. Quinton, and the Secretary. Minutes of previous meeting having been read and confirmed, and cash statements received, Mr. Forder reported upon the balance of the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund. The meeting unanimously decided that the amount now banked in the Society's name in the Birkbeck Bank should be withdrawn, and handed to Mr. Hartmann, as Treasurer. Mr. Warren desired to move a resolution making a special appeal to the party on behalf of the General Fund of the National Secular Society. This was seconded by Mr. Quinton, but afterwards withdrawn.

A resolution was proposed, calling upon branches to exercise greater discretion when engaging lecturers who were known to have defamed the Society and its officers. The chairman declined to take the resolution in the particular form in which it was proposed, and it was eventually withdrawn.

Monthly Executive meeting, held November 26; Mr. W. Heaford in the chair. Present: Messrs. E. Bater, A. B. Moss, J. M. Wheeler, G. J. Warren, P. Sabine, M. Loafer, W. Leat, E. W. Quay, and the Secretary. Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received. The Benevolent Fund Committee had referred an application from Mr. F. Haslam to the Executive, who had summoned Mr. Haslam to attend the meeting. After investigating the matter as far as possible, and in view only of the assertion that a previous application had been made to the Hon. Secretary, which might have miscarried, the Executive recommended the Benevolent Fund Committee to consider the application.

The Secretary read a signed statement *re* the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, and the meeting deputed the chairman to draw up a statement to be lodged with the solicitors to the Bank, and ordered the Secretary's statement and correspondence to be filed.

The Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant was fixed for Monday, January 11.

The meeting unanimously decided to give a Children's Party early in the new year, and the last year's Committee, with the addition of Mr. P. Sabine, were then elected. The meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, Secretary.

Obituary.

A GIFTED and noble-minded Freethinking woman has passed away in the person of Mathilde Blind, the step-daughter of Karl Blind, the German democrat, whose name she took. Born at Mannheim, March 21, 1847, she travelled much, and learnt various languages in early youth. Brought up much under the influence of Mazzini, she called herself his mind-child. Her literary career was opened by publishing a volume of poems in 1867 under the pseudonym of "Claude Lake." At the recommendation of Mazzini, she wrote an essay on Shelley, which appeared in the *Westminster Review* for 1870. She also contributed poems and papers to *Fraser's Magazine*. She translated D. F. Strauss's book, *The Old Faith and the New*, and wrote the volumes on George Eliot and Madame Roland in "The Eminent Women Series." Her various volumes of poems are characterized by tenderness, high thought, and humanity. In *The Heather on Fire* she depicted the wrongs of the Highland crofters, and in *The Ascent of Man* displayed the poetic worth of the theory of evolution. She was an ardent advocate of the emancipation of women and of advanced thought in many directions, and was highly esteemed and loved by those who had the privilege of her acquaintance. Her remains have been cremated. Prior to the removal, an address was given by Mr. M. D. Conway.

MRS. WILLIAM HENRY HOLYOAK, the wife of the well-known Leicester bookseller, died on November 9. Her funeral service was, by her wish, performed by Mr. G. J. Holyoake, whose address on the occasion has been printed and circulated among her friends.

A man must necessarily make an option between philosophy and the Gospel. If such a one is resolved to believe nothing but what is evident and conformable to received truths, he then should embrace philosophy, and leave the Christian principles. But if he is for believing in the incomprehensible mysteries of religion, he then must adhere to the Christian religion and leave philosophy; for to enjoy at the same time *evidence* and *incomprehensibility* can never be; the conjunction of these two things is almost as impossible as the conjunction of the properties of a square and of a circle.—*Peter Bayle*.

BOOK CHAT.

THE Religious Tract Society has brought out a work on *The Arch of Titus*. Instead of getting a competent scholar to write about this memorial, they have merely reprinted some lectures by the late Rev. William Knight, containing a great deal of obsolete matter. Considering the class for which the booklet is evidently intended, it is absurd to fill it with untranslated Greek and Latin—and, what is worse, lapidary Latin. The late Mr. Knight had the talent of clouding his meaning with unnecessary verbiage, and takes four pages to say that the inscription of Marlianus is a forgery, and even then he does not do so directly. The author takes exception to the base of the candlestick, as sculptured on the arch, because it is represented as being ornamented with eagles and sundry fabulous animals; and then, curiously enough, gives a reference to a passage in Josephus which speaks of a golden eagle which Herod the Great had erected on the temple when he rebuilt it. If Herod put eagles on the temple, there is no reason to be surprised at their being on the candlestick as well. Solomon's temple is said to have been ornamented with cherubs, oxen, and other creatures. The ancient synagogues of Palestine, wherever their ruins are sufficiently preserved, show animals sculptured upon them, as anyone may see by referring to the Memoirs of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Mediæval Jewish MSS. are decorated with figures of dragons, etc., very much like those on the Arch of Titus; and animal figures may be seen on the embroideries in modern synagogues. It is absurd to say that the Jews avoided such things. Procopius, the Byzantine historian, states that Gaiseric the Vandal (whom the Religious Tract Society still calls "Genseric") carried off the vessels of the Jewish temple from Rome to Africa; and that these vessels were brought to Justinian the Great, who sent them to Jerusalem. As, however, Procopius does not say anything about the candlestick and table which figure on the Arch of Titus, it is probable that these relics were destroyed at the burning of the Temple of Peace, in which they were deposited. As to the vessels which Procopius does speak of, it may be that he was mistaken as to their having originally come from the Jewish temple. There is nothing to show that he was an antiquarian; and mediæval relics were seldom authentic.

* * *

We notice in Catholic papers a big advertisement of HELL—*The Dogma of Hell Illustrated by Facts taken from Profane and Sacred History*, by the Rev. F. Schouppé, S.J. What the dogma is like may be seen in Mr. Wheeler's pamphlet, *The Christian Doctrine of Hell*.

* * *

By the way, Jonathan Edwards, one of the ablest upholders of the Eternity of Hell Torments, held, from the language of Scripture, that fires would burst out on earth, and it would become the scene of the torment of the wicked. On the other hand, Dr. Burnet held that earth would become heaven. This illustrates how much theologians know about it.

* * *

Dr. A. Dodel, the famous Freethinking Professor at Zurich, has put out a collection of his lectures and writings under the title *Aus Leben und Wissenschaft*—"Sketches from Life and Science." Among other matters it deals biologically with the facts of life and death, and gives a sketch of Konrad Keubler, the Bavarian peasant philosopher.

* * *

Edward Pickard and Edwin Tregelles sign their names to a trenchant little pamphlet on *George Fox and His Latest Biographer* (Flushing, Falmouth; 3d.). As followers of the first Quaker, they object to the superficial, and oftentimes supercilious, way in which Dr. T. Hodgkin deals with his hero. They object to his condemning, "under the misleading designation of bitterness," the very feature in George Fox's utterances that deserve the highest praise—namely, his outspoken Christ-like directness of rebuke to the "Scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites." They say, if people like Mr. Hodgkin were consistent, they "would call the words of the Hebrew prophets and the scathing utterance of Jesus to the Pharisees 'bitter'; and, in a condescending, patronizing, eclectic spirit, apologize for them because of the way of speaking 'in their day,' which excuse, if worth anything, means that they were not bitter after all."

* * *

These young Quakers defend Fox against many of the slurs cast upon him by his biographer. One curious statement is that Fox walked barefoot through the streets of Lichfield, "doubtless because his boots were bad conductors of electricity"—as if Fox understood this. It reminds us of what the Brahmins say about sitting on the sacred *kusa* grass, that it tends to isolate them from bad magnetic influences. Probably our authors do not credit the legend about Fox making himself a suit of leather, for it is a legend—though Carlyle, in *Sartor Resartus*, speaks of it as "perhaps the most remarkable incident in modern history."

They refer to the case of poor Naylor, one of Fox's converts who was convicted of blasphemy, and rightly say the trouble lay at the doors of "the custom, fostered by religious worship so-called, of making an idol of a good man and adoring his person, instead of emulating his example." Naylor was, in appearance, remarkably like the pictures of Jesus Christ. He was one of the God-intoxicated men who dared to say that God was in him; and this, according to Emerson, was the great merit of Jesus. Naylor rode into Bristol on a horse; Hume sneeringly says: "I suppose from the difficulty in that place of finding an ass." The women spread garments before him, singing "Holy, holy." For this he was tried by Parliament for blasphemy, and sentenced to be branded and whipped from Westminster to the Exchange. The atrocious sentence was carried out. He received 310 lashes at the cart tail, and the woman who washed his wounds testified there was not a nail's breadth of flesh that was not raw. Thus did the pious Presbyterians vindicate the majesty of "sweet Jesus," and show their abhorrence of "blasphemy."

* * *

We entirely concur with these young Quakers that those who want to understand George Fox must read his own journal. Those who will not do this deserve to be put off with such makeshifts as the life by Mr. Hodgkin.

* * *

Alexander Snell Cantlay issues through Messrs. Neville and Beemar a *résumé* of criticism of *Our Sacred Books*. The *Academy* complains of his speaking of the Founder of Christianity as "Jesus Bar Panther."

* * *

The *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* speaks of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* as a work which "ought to be in the library of every educated man and woman."

PROFANE JOKES.

A LADY in Cincinnati had a negro woman for cook, and noticed a Chinaman always in the kitchen. She inquired why he was about her kitchen so much. The negro woman seemed a little embarrassed, but finally told the mistress that the Chinaman was her beau. "Why," said the lady, "you do not really think about marrying that Chinaman, do you?" "Yes, ma'm, I does; he's got money and a house, and that's better than being a cook," said the negro woman. "But have you thought what the children would be if you marry that Chinaman?" asked the lady. "Yes, m'am, we has done talked about that, and knowed the children would all be Jews; but we don't kear for that," said the negress.

Rev. Baldhead Snuffler—"Yes, my dear lady, I consider that the nude is always indecent." Miss Smarty—"Then, pray, how do you account for that naked head of yours?"

It is somewhat old, but a true saying, that "Truth is often stranger than fiction." The writer heard this: A nurse girl, noticing a dog licking the grazed skin of a child, remarked: "Look, ma'm, Pincher is like Moreover." Mrs. M.—"What do you mean, Lizzie?" "Don't you know, ma'm, in the Bible, 'Moreover the dog licked his sores.'"

"Did my dead doggie go to heaven?" said little Benny Bloombumper to the Rev. Dr. Thirdly. "Well, Benny," replied the good man, "I am afraid that animals do not go to heaven at all; but, if they did, I am sure your doggie would go too." "But don't you think he went to heaven, anyhow?" persisted Benny. "He was a Skye terrier, you know."

Parson Johnson (catechizing)—"Now, 'Rastus, yo' believes dat de whale swallered Jonah, don't yo'?" Little 'Rastus—"Yais, pahson." Parson Johnson—"Dat's right, 'Rastus. Now, tell me *why* yo' believes it." 'Rastus—"Cause I'd git swatted ef I didn't."

Brimstone Bob—"How kin yer git 'to Lost Basin Settlement? Why, take the Devil's Fork stage to Sulphur Canyon, then go down Hell-pit Crick to Fire Hill, the Devil's Cave 'outfit' will put you across Purgatory Flats, and you can git the Past Redemption stage from Burning-springs to Hell-fire Buttes, then—" Rev. MacWeary Shepherd (to station agent)—"Wh-when is the next train East?"

After death there is nothing. Death itself is nothing—only the most recent arrival, or goal, reached in the velocity of space. Let the avaricious ones discard their hopes who would expect happiness after death, and let anxious ones set aside their fears who would fear punishment after death. Dost thou betray any curiosity to know where thou wouldst rest after death? Where do those rest who have not come into existence at all? Rapacious Time swallows us up, and we merge into chaos.—*Seneca (Troades)*.

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.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, Chilperic Edwards, "The Monuments and the Bible."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road. Ball's Pond): 7.15, J. M. Robertson, "The Tory Religion as Preached by Mr. Balfour." December 8, at 8.45, Social party. December 10, at 8.45, A member, "Money: Its Use and Abuse."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Dr. Allinson, "Health and Happiness at Little Cost."
EDMONTON (Theatre Royal): 7, T. Thurlow, "Wealth: Its Production, Ownership, and Use."
ISLINGTON BRANCH: 8.45, Quarterly meeting at the Bradlaugh Club.
KINGSLAND: 12, Meeting at Bradlaugh Club and Institute.
PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspar, "The Stoic Philosophy."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Spurgeon."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "John Knox."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, Lectures.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3, Mr. Ward will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): H. Snell—11, "What is Divine Authority?" 3, "Under which Lord?" 7, "Turk and Christian in Armenia."
BRISTOL BRANCH (St. James's Hall): A. B. Moss—11, "The Collapse of Theology"; 3, "The Evolution of Man"; 7, "What do Christians Believe?"
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. Heaford, "Religion at the Bar of Reason."
DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, H. McGuinness, "The Dark Side of Christianity." Dec. 16, 17, 18, Mr. Cohen lectures.
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class—business meeting; 6.30, J. Cassells, "Wages."
HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, C. Robinson and J. Sketchley, Debate on "Astrology."
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A. Milnes, M.A., "The Reports of the Vaccination Commission."
LEEDS (Liberty Hall, Victoria-road): 3, A. S. Fryer, "Spiritualism: A Delusion and a Fraud."
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): L. Small, B.Sc., "The Age of the Earth."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, H. Simpson, "Cremation," illustrated with lantern views.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 8, Members' meeting to elect a new Secretary.
OXHILL AND STANLEY (Albert Hall, Stanley): O. Cohen—December 5, at 7, "What Think ye of Christ?" Dec. 6, at 3, "The Case Against Christianity"; at 7, "The Origin of Man." Dec. 7, at 7, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?"
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Special Exhibition by Lantern of "Wonders in Nature and Art," with description of same.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, Lantern lecture, J. Henri, "Architecture."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—December 5, 6, and 7, Ox Hill; 9, Todmorden; 10 and 11, Blackburn; 13, Birmingham; 16, 17, and 18, Derby; 20, Leicester; 27, Camberwell.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—December 6, Bristol; 13, Liverpool.

POSITIVISM.

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

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

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Athenæum Lecture Room. Mr. Malcolm Quin will deliver addresses on Wednesday evenings, December 9 and 16, at 7.30. All seats free.

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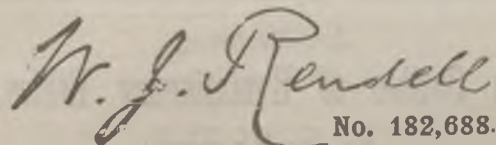
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