

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.]

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MR. FOOTE'S LETTERS FROM AMERICA.

IX.—CINCINNATI.

THE Grand Rapids newspapers gave fair reports of our lectures in the Opera House. The *Democrat* made a big display in the following fashion:—

FOR FREE THINKERS.

Yesterday Was a Veritable Secular Jubilee.

TWO FAMOUS SPEAKERS

Addressed Large Audiences in Powers' Opera House.

Charles Watts and G. W. Foote, both of London, Eng., Argued Eloquenty for Darwinism and the Principles of Secular Belief.

With regard to Mr. Watts's lecture, the *Democrat* says it was an "eloquent exposition" of Secularism, and that, "while Mr. Watts has been heard here before many times, at no previous time has he spoken with better effect than yesterday." Finally, it says: "He referred feelingly to the cordiality displayed towards him since his first appearance in this city, eleven years ago, and a round of hearty applause gave assurance that his efforts were appreciated by a large number of his auditors." The *Democrat* mentioned the packed audience in the evening, and refers to the "attentive and frequently applauding listeners." The following paragraph will perhaps interest my friends in England:—

"Mr. Foote is of medium height, the possessor of a bearded, kindly face, speaks with just enough of an English accent to be noticeable, and is thoroughly pleasing in his methods of oratory. Unlike many Englishmen, he is extremely witty, as well as eloquent, and many of his original comparisons last night evoked much laughter."

The *Herald*, as we expected, only gave a brief report of the meetings, but as far as it went it was satisfactory:—

"Charles Watts, the celebrated English Agnostic, addressed a large audience upon prominent questions of modern theological beliefs at Powers' Opera House yesterday morning. In the evening G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society of England, addressed an immense audience upon similar subjects. He is a witty speaker, and constantly enlivened his discourse by many witticisms and mild sarcasm."

Monday was spent in visiting Mr. Blodgett's house and saying good-bye to our Grand Rapids friends. Mr. Rice, the proprietor of Sweet's Hotel, was most kind and attentive, and seemed really sorry to part with us. We left in the evening at seven o'clock for Cincinnati, where we arrived at seven o'clock the next morning. It was a bad night for both of us. Mr. Watts was upset by some article of diet that disagreed with him, and I could hardly get a minute's sleep. The heat and the close atmosphere of the sleeping car were too much for me. Science had exhausted itself in providing luxurious accommodation, but the essential conditions of health were absent. I could have slept on a hard bed in a field, with the great pure sky

for a roof; but in that stifling berth I tossed and perspired as a prisoner might do the night before his execution. We were both glad to get out of the train at Cincinnati, although it was a dismal, muggy morning. Mr. Levi, a member of the Ohio Liberal Society, was there with his brother to meet us. We took a car to his house, where we were hospitably entertained, Mrs. Levi doing everything in her power to make us comfortable. Directly after breakfast we went to bed and slept till one o'clock, as we wanted to be fairly fresh for the evening meeting, which took place in the fine Auditorium Hall. Unfortunately the audience was not very large. Perhaps the prices of admission were too high, and we were too little known to the general public. On the other hand, however, the audience was extremely enthusiastic. Having had a taste of our quality, the Liberals were all anxious to hear us again. Had we lectured three nights instead of one, they were quite sure that we should have had crowded houses. Mr. Watts lectured first, from eight till nine, and I followed from nine till ten. Two lectures in one evening was a large supply, yet the audience would have taken more.

A fair report of the meeting appeared in the *Commercial*. I cut out for my English readers the whole of the report in the *Record*:—

"TWO FREETHOUGHT LECTURES.

"Eloquent English Infidels Expound their Creeds."

"The audience that greeted the English Freethought lecturers, George W. Foote and Charles Watts, at the Auditorium last night, was a disappointment as far as numbers is concerned. C. J. Wysecarver presided, and, introducing the speakers, took occasion to score President Cleveland for his Thanksgiving proclamation, which, he said, was an insult to every intelligent person in the country.

"Mr. Watts, the special lecturer of the English Secular Society, was the first speaker, and took for his subject 'The Bible and Civilization.' In denying that the scripture had promoted civilization, he proved himself an orator of rare eloquence and power, and was liberally applauded. As a phrase-maker he is the equal, if not the superior, of Colonel Ingersoll, and it may be said he made a deep and lasting impression. His manner of delivery is perfect, and gives evidence of deep sincerity.

"Mr. Foote, the editor of the London *Freethinker*, and who has suffered imprisonment for the cause he holds dear, kept the close attention of his listeners for over an hour in an address on 'The Doom of the Gods.' It was replete with pathos, humor, and eloquence, and was quite as favorably received as that of his predecessor.

"The lectures were given under the auspices of the Ohio Liberal Society."

This is another illustration of what I have previously referred to—the open-mindedness and liberality of American journalism. Freethought is not boycotted here as it is in England. The papers follow their own lines in their leading articles, but they recognize that their principal function is to give news, and they report whatever is of interest to any reasonable section of the public.

Thanks to the friendly assistance of Mr. Levi, we were able the next day to see something of Cincinnati and its environs. The city contains about three hundred thousand inhabitants. The streets, as in nearly all American cities, run north and south, and east and west; and the street car service is admirably convenient. All the cars are propelled by cable or electricity, and run at a high rate of speed. Cincinnati contains many fine stores, shops, and commercial houses. It has an air of business solidity.

The citizens look eager and occupied. Everybody in America at present is after the almighty dollar. After the Monroe doctrine, or perhaps before it, money is the god of American idolatry. I hear no one speak of American authors, or artists, or thinkers; they talk of millionaires, and who made or lost the last great pile. Some people would be sad at this. I am not. I recognize it as a stage the American people have to pass through in developing the resources of their country and laying the material basis of their civilization. The tree has to strike root first. Foliage and blossom and fruit will come in time. A new nation is forming here, and that is the work (or growth) of generations, and perhaps of centuries.

Among the public buildings of Cincinnati I may mention the City Hall, which is solid and satisfying, and the Post Office, which is handsome and imposing. Corinthian columns lend a gracefulness to its large proportions.

The environs of Cincinnati must be very fine in summer. The city is surrounded by considerable hills, the summits of which command beautiful views. We took a trip to Port Thomas, a military station overlooking the Ohio River and the state of Kentucky, so famous in the old days of negro slavery. The prospect is really splendid, and, when nature wears her summer liveries, I can understand why the spot is resorted to by health-seekers from all parts of Ohio.

Port Thomas is not like an English barrack. It is quite open to the public; in fact, it is not enclosed. I noticed two military prisoners, paying the penalty for some breach of discipline. They were digging sod around a tree, and a soldier stood by them with loaded rifle and fixed bayonet. To me it was a distressing spectacle. I could not understand why the defaulters were humiliated by such public exposure. Is it that America has less respect, after all, than effete old England for the rights and feelings of the individual citizen?

About 550 soldiers are stationed at Port Thomas. We were just in time to see the roll-call. The men were not as smart and well disciplined as English soldiers, though they looked keen and alert, and would doubtless give a good account of themselves in actual warfare. They lounged about in free-and-easy fashion, and I learnt that they go in and out of barracks pretty much at their pleasure.

The standing army of the United States numbers twenty-five thousand. All the States have their separate militias, something like our volunteers, though they can be called upon for State service if necessary. I hear that an increase of the standing army is contemplated. Uncle Sam is also fortifying his coasts and building new iron-clads. It looks as though the great Western Republic were drifting fast into the great militant stream of what we call "civilization." And the worst of it is, that when nations get powerful armies and navies they are too apt to use them, if only to see how they operate.

A few words, in concluding this letter, on Freethought in Cincinnati. Mr. Jamieson is at present stationed here as a Liberal lecturer, and he appears to be highly respected. His lectures are said to be solid and convincing. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Liberals in the city, and they turn out in strong force when Ingersoll lectures here. Unfortunately, there has been some decline in Freethought organization and propaganda during the late hard times, but the prospect will doubtless brighten as trade improves and prosperity returns. There is talk here of establishing a Secular Sunday-school, and, if possible, of organizing a Secular Church, in emulation of the example of the Liberals of Oregon. G. W. FOOTE.

X.—AT THE CAPITAL.

Mr. Watts and I left Cincinnati on Thursday evening, November 26. In one respect we were not sorry to depart. We found the air rather relaxing. The weather was phenomenally warm, and the city lies in a hollow. Up on the hills, where the rich citizens are emigrating, we might have felt more invigorated. We said good-bye to our kind host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Levi, and were soon in a Pullman sleeping car, speeding and often bumping along through Ohio towards Pennsylvania. That night I got some sleep by laying outside my berth in my shirt and trousers. Even then I was much too hot; in fact, I was perspiring freely all the time.

Thursday was Thanksgiving Day. Following the custom of the country, President Cleveland had issued a proclamation to the people of the United States, setting aside November 26 as a holiday, and recommending them to thank God Almighty for all his mercies to their nation. President Cleveland, who, like all American statesmen, has to cultivate a reputation for piety, brought Jesus Christ into his proclamation, much to the disgust of all Jews, Secularists, Liberals, Agnostics, and other non-Christians. Most of the Christians, however, were highly delighted. It inspired them with a fresh hope of success for their holy project of getting God Almighty and Jesus Christ admitted into the preamble to the United States constitution. Nobody seems to give a thought to the poor Holy Ghost, who is left out in the cold. But perhaps his (or her or its) turn will come afterwards, when the Christians feel able to do justice to the whole Trinity.

Thanksgiving Day is marked by a great slaughter of turkeys. An American feels he has missed the true inwardness of the occasion if he fails to eat turkey with cranberry sauce. People were carrying home these devoted birds wholesale on Wednesday. Sometimes the victims were alive, and destined to be killed as well as cooked in the kitchen; and as I saw them carried along in this fashion I thought I should like to have their honest opinion of the design argument.

One thing that I saw on Thanksgiving Day made me wonder whether the great Western Republic may not, after all, be eaten out by the vices and follies it has imported from Europe. Hearing a band in the street, I went to the door to catch a glimpse of American rejoicing. The band was a small one, and was followed by a number of small persons belonging to the "lordly" half of the human species. There were about a hundred boys, ranging, I should say, from nine to fifteen years of age, all wearing a sort of military uniform. Their officers, also boys, carried little naked swords, which they flourished murderously when giving their little orders. It was certainly a very curious spectacle for Thanksgiving Day. Those lads ought to have been playing cricket or some other outdoor game; instead of which they were strutting through the streets like callow warriors, who hoped some day to wash their weapons in the blood of their enemies. And the worst of it was that the people at the windows and in the doorways seemed to enjoy the show. Men smiled and women beamed on that ghastly idiotic procession. Nor was this the end of the mischief. I was told that the Churches were nearly all training boys in this manner, calling them Knights of saint this and Knights of saint that. The Catholics began it, and the Protestants followed suit; indeed, they talk of preparing for a great religious war, either of Protestant against Catholic or of both against the common enemy of "infidelity."

I am not surprised at all this on reflection. Religion has always gone hand-in-hand with War, and Praying and Fighting have been excellent companions. Priests of all faiths—not excepting Christianity: no, no, far from it—have never been backward in asking God's blessing on bloodshed and massacre. It is useless to look to them to promote peace and goodwill on earth. We must look for that to Reason and Humanity, and to Science, which is gradually bringing the sensible people of all countries to understand each other through commerce and international communication. Meanwhile I venture to hope that the more intelligent part of the American public will try to check the growth of militarism in their country. Unless they do so, they will have to pay the penalty. History teaches that true Republican institutions cannot rest on a military basis. The love of swords and rifles leads on to warfare, to conquest or defeat, and the certainty in either case of ultimate despotism.

This is rather a melancholy prelude to my visit to Washington, the capital of the United States; so I had better dismiss my apprehensions and cultivate a more cheerful view of the situation.

We left Cincinnati at half-past six on Thursday evening, and our train did not reach Washington until one the next afternoon. A ride of over eighteen hours gives one some idea of the vastness of this country. Mr. Watts had a further ride of nearly three hours to Philadelphia. We parted for the first time in our pilgrimage, and both of us felt rather lonely after shaking hands as the train was about to move out of the station.

I had written to Dr. Croffut, the Liberal whose address

I had; but he was absent from home on business. Fortunately my letter had been sent up to Mr. F. D. Woodbury, whom I had seen at the Chicago Congress. He met me at the station, took me to the Metropolitan Hotel, and afterwards entertained me for the evening at his residence. The next day he escorted me round the city, and showed me the principal objects of interest. I did not see any of the Liberals until Sunday morning. I thought it curious, but they did not know of my whereabouts, as Dr. Croffut only returned home on Saturday night. Mr. Woodbury is secretary of the National Spiritualist Association, and of course there are certain things we do not hold in common; but he is thoroughly sound on the great principle of the secularization of the State, and of absolute freedom and equality of opportunity for all forms of belief. He is also a "good fellow" socially, and his wife is a very pleasant and intelligent lady. I am indebted to Mr. Woodbury for much kindness in Washington, and if ever he visits old England I will try to show him that I am not ungrateful.

My hotel was on Pennsylvania-avenue, a splendidly broad thoroughfare, with the Capitol at one end and the Treasury House at the other. Washington has been called a city of magnificent distances. It is laid out on a generous scale. Everywhere you see broad roads and wide pavements. The city covers a vast area, considering the number of its inhabitants, which is less than three hundred thousand. I believe there are no manufactures to speak of. Washington is chiefly residential. It is the seat of the Legislature, the Executive, and the High Judiciary. Without these the city would probably be insignificant; with them it becomes in one way the first city in America. There is no municipality, and nobody has a political vote at Washington unless he is qualified elsewhere. Everything is under the direct control of the Federal Government, and Washington is thus, in the fullest sense of the word, the empire city, though the distinction is often inaccurately claimed for New York.

Naturally there are many visitors to this city—some on politics, some on business, and more sight-seeing. I am told that a visit to Washington is often paid by couples on their honeymoon. Altogether it is not astonishing that the city has a large number of handsome hotels. Two or three of them are quite palatial.

Perambulating the streets, you soon notice a large proportion of colored people. The total number of them in Washington, as I am informed, is about seventy thousand. Most of them occupy servile positions, but some are well-to-do, and a few are positively wealthy. When a colored man can ride in his carriage and pair, with a white man on the box, he is as near heaven as he can get on this side of Jordan.

The average darkie is said to be still very superstitious. He takes to crude religion quite naturally, and wears it as easily as an overcoat. He does not slave like the white man if he can help it. He likes to fleet the time merrily. You hear his rich chuckling laugh break forth on the smallest provocation. He believes the Bible in every detail, and swallows its thickest stories as cheerfully as the whale swallowed Jonah. But he minimises his share in the curse pronounced on Adam. I believe he gets an immense amount of fun out of life, and in this respect he is, after all, wiser than most of the white millionaires.

I should require columns to describe all the sights I saw in Washington. I had not time to ascend the Washington Monument, down by the river. It is five hundred feet high. Of course you ascend it by an elevator. The Americans do that if they only have to mount one floor. I went through the Capitol, which stands on the highest ground in the city, in the midst of gardens which are lit up at night by electricity. The dome of this building is fine, but not lofty enough. It must have looked far finer on the original structure. The two large wings, now occupied by the House of Representatives and the Senate, are additions. Thus it happens that, from the sides, you can hardly see the dome at all. The best view of it is obtained a third of a mile up Pennsylvania-avenue. The whole building stands out clearly from that distance, and the dome springs up splendidly into the sea of air.

The Americans talk of building something grand and eclipsing on that spot, but the present Capitol seems built to stay. It is a solid structure, and will require a lot of taking down. There is nothing very remarkable about the two halls of Congress or the Supreme Court. Workmen were cleaning and painting while I was there. I missed

seeing the *life* of the place, the eager game of politics, the scenic display of animosities and rivalries, that are sometimes keener than bloodshed.

Behind the Capitol is a building which is not yet completed. It is the new Congressional Library, constructed to afford accommodation for two million books. The exterior is pleasing, without any striking architectural merit; but wealth and art have been taxed to adorn the interior. I should say it eclipses everything else of the kind in the world. The marble rotunda in the centre is a miracle. Imagine the reading-room of the British Museum, only loftier, built with the costliest marble, beautifully wrought and carved; and around it, under the dome, a series of quiet galleries, whose marble balustrades are fit for the greatest king's palace, and the walls covered with lovely frescoes towards the ceiling, while the lower parts are stuccoed in cool, reposeful colors. The great entrance hall, above a broad flight of marble steps, is really magnificent. In the centre of the marble floor is a circle of brasses representing the twelve signs of the zodiac. On either side are lofty, spacious rooms, decorated in different styles; one old English, one Greco-Roman, and so forth. Altogether, I think this building, incomplete as it is, is about the finest I have seen in America. I hope to see it again at some time, in its perfection, with a number of marble statues placed advantageously about the hall, galleries, and staircases.

At the other end of Pennsylvania-avenue stands the solid Treasury House. I visited the parts to which the public are admitted. I saw ladies counting dollar bills, for issue or destruction. I saw the printing machine putting the final red seal on the new bills. I went down to the vaults, and saw the steel-door-guarded vaults where the gold and silver coinage is kept. I saw the copper vat in which the used-up bills are reduced to pulp. And I listened to the glib voice of the attendant, who overwhelmed his auditors with incessant recitals of the number of dollars, here, there, and everywhere. Finally I got sick of dollars, and glad to step out into the fresh air. In the Treasury House garden I saw two roses blooming, a red and a white, although it was the 28th of November; and they were so much handsomer than the dollar bills! I could have fondled and kissed them, and I have thought of them every day since.

Behind the Treasury, which is a huge building, stands the famous White House, the official residence of the President of the United States. It is not large, and its architecture is plain Georgian. Nobody thinks it adequate, and it is probable that the President of this tremendous Republic will some day inhabit a superb palace. But the building has historical interest. Abraham Lincoln lived there, and that alone gives it a kind of consecration. In the Capitol I saw a large and good picture of that same Abraham Lincoln, surrounded by his Cabinet, and preparing to sign the proclamation that ended slavery in the United States. The portrait of that great man seemed faithful. The strong black hair; the deep-lined, ample brow; the rugged face, so full of character; and the kind, yet resolute, mouth, made him stand out as the master-figure of that picture. And as I gazed long and absorbedly on Lincoln's face, in the midst of that group, I felt more than ever that in every memorable push of human affairs we may trace the hand of a single great man—one who sees and acts, and dares the issue, standing all the while on something firmer than the shifting sands of a temporary public opinion.

But I must hasten on. My lecture at Washington did not attract a large audience. The Liberals had forgotten to advertise, and the rains descended and the floods came on Sunday afternoon. Those who were present assured me of their high appreciation, and nearly a column of report appeared in Monday's *Times* and *Post*, the two leading papers in the City.

Mr. Watts lectured at Philadelphia, both afternoon and evening. The Liberals there are numerous and organised, and Mr. Watts had good meetings in spite of the snow. His evening lecture was followed by a good deal of discussion, in which I hear he shone as usual. On Monday evening he addressed a good audience at Scranton, and on Tuesday he joined me again at New York. In the evening we called on the Ingersolls. Unfortunately, the Colonel was not allowed to see any visitors, being confined to his room by a bad attack of sciatica, which had necessitated the cancelling of all his engagements. We spent an hour

in very pleasant conversation with Mrs. Ingersoll and Mrs. Brown, who assured us that the Colonel was progressing most favorably, and would be able to see us in a week or so, as he would have seen us then if they had been foolish enough to tell him of our presence. On Wednesday we went out to Dr. Foote's country house at Larchmont, and enjoyed two days' rest and recreation. The Doctor entertained us generously, made us feel quite at home, and treated us to some beautiful drives in the neighborhood. He is one of the "jolliest" friends we have met here. His fine, frank, cordial nature is visible in his face, no less than his high intelligence. Dr. Foote's house is situated close to the water. In the offing you see Long Island; on the left is a delightful bay. The weather was lovely all the time. Glorious sunshine, keen bracing air, and a charming prospect made us feel quite young again; and we were as sorry to part from Dr. Foote as he was evidently sorry to part from us. However, he made us promise to come again.

G. W. FOOTE.

'SIR RICHARD BURTON.

(Concluded from page 789.)

RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON was born at Barham House, Herts, on March 19, 1821. He was of mingled English, Irish, and Scotch descent. His father, Colonel Burton, was a considerable traveller, and appears to have been always on the move. He wished Richard, his eldest son, to settle down in the Church. But the black business, or, indeed, any settling down, was never to his mind. At school he learnt fisticuffs and fencing more readily than Latin; yet he became not only the first swordsman, but the first linguist of his day. His niece says of his boyish days: "Rough in manner, mischievous as a monkey, and subject to outbursts of temper, he often called down upon his head the vials of his father's wrath. But, on the other hand, he was brave and affectionate in the highest degree." He was educated at Oxford at a time when the Arabic professor seems to have been a professor merely. "When Burton required assistance in mastering the language, and applied to the learned gentleman in question, he was told a professor would teach a class, and not an individual." In 1842 he entered the East India Company's service, and soon began to earn the character of an intrepid explorer and close student of the people. He surveyed Sind and the Neilgherries, but gave up surveying for active service under Sir C. Napier. It was doubtless his study of the religions of the East which made him a Freethinker. He circulated as his own thought the following statement, which has been attributed to Humboldt: "Revealed religions consist of three parts, all more or less untrue. (1) A cosmogony more or less absurd. (2) A historical sketch more or less falsified. (3) A system of morality more or less pure." When he returned to England his views "ranked as utter infidelity." He scorned to hide them, whereby he made enemies. Granted a furlough, he started for Mecca and Medinah, cities no Christian had reached; Burckhart, who visited them in 1814-15, having become a Moslem. His *Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Mecca*, records the most romantic journey, and the chief incidents are found in the interesting *True Life* before us. After this Burton explored East and Central Africa. During the Crimean war, which he regarded as an unmitigated evil to this country, he became chief of the staff of the Osmanli cavalry, and was chiefly instrumental in organising it. He was, by the way, also author of the bayonet exercise used throughout the army.

Burton was a scholar of the kind that is born, not made. He had his own way of learning a language, and even at college disputed with his tutors as to the pronunciation of Latin vowels. He learnt, so to speak, by ear and mouth. He says: "Whenever I converse with anyone in a language that I am learning, I take the trouble to repeat their words inaudibly after them, and so learn the trick of pronunciation and emphasis." When he read, he did so aloud, that the ear might aid memory. So perfect was his Arabic that when he told their own tales to the Arabs they would roll on the ground in fits of laughter.

After the Crimean war he explored Central Africa, discovering Lake Tanganyika in 1858. He then crossed America to Utah, giving in his *City of the Saints* one of the

best accounts of the Mormon settlements, and of the route since taken by the trans-continental railroad. He married, and was appointed Consul to Fernando Po and Commissioner to the King of Dahomey, whom his wife wished to convert by means of a magic-lantern exhibiting the life of Christ. Then he went as Consul to Santos, Brazil, and explored the highlands of that country and Paraguay. In 1869 he became Consul at Damascus, a well-paid post among people his Moslem proclivities delighted in. Here he explored Syria and Palestine, the latter with Drake and Palmer.* But his wife's pious proclivities brought him into trouble. Proselytism was ridiculous to him. Indeed, he was more Moslem than Christian. But his wife's soul was in conversion, and she records that she once stood sponsor to a convict, who within a month was caught at housebreaking again. A missionary trouble arose:—

"An enthusiastic, self-ordained evangelical preacher, who, by the way, had not taken the precaution to master Arabic before expounding his version of the Gospel, and therefore pathetically entreated his hearers to lift up their dog unto the Lord, for a broken and contrite dog He would not despise, insisted upon distributing Testaments and tracts in the bazaar, calling meanwhile upon the Moslems to forsake Mohammed and be baptized. This rant among an inflammable population like the Damascenes could not be allowed to continue."

The fanatic answered, "I should glory in martyrdom," when Burton remonstrated with him. Burton's wife, however, concerned herself in promoting a religious revival among a spiritist sect of Moslems called Shazlis, whom a Roman Catholic priest led in the direction of Catholicism. She offered to stand sponsor to all the converts, and baptized every dying person she could get hold of. The Moslems were enraged, and a warning reached the Foreign Office that the Consul's life was in danger. To avoid complications, he was immediately recalled. He returned to England, and took a trip to Iceland.

After some time the service rewarded the soldierly, diplomatic, linguistic, and literary services of a man, comparable in many ways to General Charles Gordon, with a consulship at out-of-the-way Trieste, which would have suited the intellect and capacity of the most ordinary Foreign Office hack. Here he was left to die in a climate which undermined his health. His niece makes out that once again his wife's religion was at fault. She says: "Thanks to his wife's imprudence and passion for proselytizing, all further promotion was hopeless. Morocco, Constantinople, would never be for him; his career was blighted." He occupied himself much with literary work, translated the *Lusiads* of the Portuguese soldier-writer, Camoens, with whom he had much in common, and worked at his famous translation of *The Thousand Nights and a Night*, which, with many intermissions, had occupied him thirty-two years, and which brought him both fame and profit. The author of *The Maiden Tribute* tried to hound on a prosecution against him, but Burton said he was prepared to defend his literal naturalism with the Bible in one hand, and Shakespeare in the other. At this time he wrote to the editor of the *Freethinker*, who supplied him with pamphlets and material likely to be of service if indicted. † No reader of his works could doubt his being a Freethinker.

Miss Stisted is one of those mistaken persons who fancy Atheism means the affirmation of a universal denial, so she says he was no Atheist. "A God he believed in, Unknowable and Impersonal." Most good Theists would think this no God at all, and could hardly find a stronger statement of Atheism than these lines from the *Kasidah*:—

There is no God, no man-made God; a bigger, stronger, crueller man,
Black phantom of our baby fears, ere Thought, the life of Life,
began.....
Your childish fears would seek a Sire, by the non-human God
defin'd.
What your five wits may wot ye weest; what is you please to dub
designed.
You bring down Heaven to vulgar Earth; your Maker like yourselves
you make;

* Burton had a high esteem for Professor Edward Henry Palmer, and, while his fate was still uncertain, went on the search for him. Of course he was more emancipated than Palmer with regard to the bogus holy sites, though Palmer came to see that Christians knew nothing of the site of the crucifixion before the fourth century. Of his friend Burton says: "He had not then learnt that the so-called 'Sinai' is simply a modern forgery."

† Mr. Foote has never made this public, but in his absence I take the responsibility of now mentioning the matter.

You quake to own a reign of Law, you pray the Law its laws to break ;
 You pray, but hath your thought e'er weighed how empty vain
 The prayer must be
 That begs a boon already given, or craves a change of Law to see ?

She says, however :—

“As regards the future life, while admitting that absolute certainty on that point is unattainable, he was inclined to think all ideas of another existence copies more or less idealized of the present :—

Then, if Nirwānā round our life with nothingness, 'tis haply best ;

Thy toil and troubles, want and woe, at length have won their guerdon—Rest.

“Of practical advice he had the best to give—to uproot ignorance, avoid self-tormenting, do good because good is good to do, and lastly to

Abjure the Why and seek the How.

“From these convictions, arrived at in the prime of manhood, and after the profoundest study, Richard Burton never swerved. No mystery was affected ; he spoke and published but too openly. His beautiful poem, the ‘Kasidah,’ written about this time, his Terminal Essay in the original, as also in the Library, edition of the *Thousand Nights and a Night*, almost his last work, would satisfy any reader that his views differed not merely from those of any Christian Church, but also from the invertebrate eclecticism of the day. Towards the Church of Rome he had a positive aversion, declaring she had added a fourth person to the Trinity.

“To sum up, there is not the shadow of a doubt among those who knew Burton best, and who had no reason for not speaking the truth concerning him, that he looked with somewhat cynical eyes upon the conflicting religions of the world.”

It is in the *Kasidah* (reviewed in the *Freethinker* of July 5) that Burton's views are most completely to be seen. Lady Burton herself confesses that he talked Agnostically to the very last, and that of his intimate friends “one would describe him as a Deist, one as an Agnostic, and one as an Atheist and Freethinker,” though she calls him “half-Sufi, half-Catholic.” It is, evident, however, from his niece's book, and the testimony of intimate friends, that the modern Raleigh may be claimed as a thorough Freethinker.

J. M. WHEELER.

OUR VISIT TO AMERICA.

It is about twelve years since I first visited the United States and Canada. I then travelled tens of thousands of miles, and was charmed with the beauty and picturesque scenery which constantly met my gaze. The extended plains and forests, studded with trees and flowers of gorgeous foliage and exquisite bloom—varied only by the purling streamlets of the clearest of waters, under the canopy of a blue, soft sky, in the midst of a refreshing and balmy air—presented a unique spectacle of unrivalled grandeur, the recollection of which will never be effaced from my memory.

My recent visit with Mr. Foote to America, although not so extended as on previous occasions, was exceedingly pleasant. It would be difficult to find a more genial companion than my friend and colleague, the editor of this journal. No matter in what circumstances we were placed, he was always the same happy, generous, and comfort-inspiring friend. During the two months we were together I discovered in him many excellent traits of character which previously I had failed to recognise. It is said that to know a man thoroughly you should live with him. I found this to be true in reference to Mr. Foote. For the greater part of ten weeks we were seldom apart. We travelled together, lectured from the same platform, and stayed at the same hotel, and never once did he manifest the slightest disposition to which any exception could be taken. He is a friend to be proud of, and a colleague in whom one can have implicit faith. Our American association will long linger in my recollections of pleasant times.

Excellent and graphic as Mr. Foote's “Letters from America” have been, he has hardly done himself justice as to the impression his lectures made upon every audience he addressed. He came, he saw, and he conquered those who heard him ; and the enthusiastic applause that greeted his logical and eloquent efforts clearly testified that he

“caught on.” But the platform was not his only scene of triumph, for he was equally fortunate in private circles. His social qualities were as pleasing at the various domestic gatherings we attended as his intellectual capacity was gratifying at the public meetings.

It is a pleasure to me to be able to corroborate what the President has said in his Letters in reference to our success among our American and Canadian friends. The warmest hospitality has been accorded us, and earnest invitations given us to visit that great continent again as soon as possible. Of course, financially the tour has not been profitable. To make lecturing pay in America, ample week-night engagements should be made, as well as those for Sundays. The American elections and other causes prevented this being done in our case. Hence we were kept idle most of the week, and had to travel immense distances to fill a Sunday engagement. In one instance we had to go over seven hundred miles for our Sunday lectures, at a cost of four pounds each. Still, our labours have not been in vain ; we have made many good friends, and we did our best to show them what English Freethought advocacy really is.

Although, financially, our visit to America has been a considerable loss to us, it has been productive of many advantages. It has brought the Freethinkers of the two countries into closer touch with each other, and our brief sojourn among our American friends has afforded them an opportunity of understanding what the position of Freethought in England really is. At all of our lectures we both took special care to explain Secularism as it is expounded in this country ; and it was encouraging to us to witness the interest taken in our explanation.

Another advantage arising from our visit was, that it enabled Mr. Foote to make many personal friends on the other side of the Atlantic ; and it gave me the pleasure of once more meeting those with whom years ago I made a firm and, as it has proved, a lasting friendship. Mr. Foote “caught on” among the friends wherever he went, and always received pressing invitations to “come again.” To me it was exceedingly gratifying to have such cordial receptions as I did at the various scenes of my former labors. It was an evidence to me that my humble services on previous occasions had been appreciated. The warm welcome given us by Colonel Ingersoll and his ever genial family ; by Captain Adams, of Montreal ; D. A. Blodgett, of Grand Rapids ; J. B. Bentley, of Philadelphia ; E. Macdonald, editor of the *Truthseeker*, and Dr. E. B. Foote and his excellent son, of New York, repaid us to a large extent for any drawbacks we have had to encounter.

The more I see of Colonel Ingersoll the greater my admiration for him becomes. His domestic life is as pure and loving as his public career is grand and imposing. As an orator, few can equal him ; and, in my opinion, none can surpass him. It has been truly said that, “if he had lived eighteen hundred years ago, he would have been, in all probability, the founder, instead of the destroyer, of religion ; for his gigantic intellect is supplemented with an equally Titanic affectionate nature. There is that about him which warms and cheers all who come under his influence. . . . His life is so rich and strong, his presence so magnetic, that in a sick chamber he would be better than many a physician ; and it would only require the ignorance of an age like that of Buddha or of Jesus to endow him with the qualities and power of a god.” The religion, however, that Colonel Ingersoll would have founded could not have been one of mystery, creeds, and dogmas, but a philosophy based upon the simplicity of nature and the grandeur of humanity. “His language reports the sweetest music of the winds and waves, and intoxicates the senses like the budding beauty of spring, or the amorous kisses of its soft, perfumed air.” Though he writes in prose, he is one of the greatest poets that ever lived.

Colonel Ingersoll is equally eminent as a humorist—in fact, he plays in turn upon all the strings of the human heart. Under his skilful touch, tears are soon dried in the dimples of mirth and joy. Wit and humor are most powerful weapons when wisely used against the shams and hypocrisies of the Church. Madame de Staël was once asked if she believed in ghosts. “No,” she replied ; “but I am afraid of them.” So it is with many people, who, while no longer believing in the dogmas of the Church, are continually haunted with the fear of their childhood's training. Ingersoll's plan is to laugh away this fear. He does not make sport of the individuals, but with their

foolish and fear-begotten notions; and his jokes are mingled with gentleness and kindness, that win the involuntary assent of even his religious adversary. Moreover, his darts of wit are free from vulgarity, and are in no sense offensive to ears polite. He is no harlequin; yet from the intellectual he evokes smiles where clowns would excite pity. As deep sentiment is relieved by Shakespeare in the wit and humor of such characters as Touchstone or Dogberry, so is pathos tempered by Ingersoll with pleasantries which are as rays of sun upon the dark realities of life.

In Colonel Ingersoll man has no truer friend, the Church no deadlier foe. Under the force of his brilliant tongue, his keen wit, and his withering rhetoric, priestcraft and religious shams have no mercy. With him the Church is the enemy of man and the tempter of woman, fettering human thought and impeding human progress. As he truly says: "It has done harm enough. It has covered the world with blood. It has filled the asylums for the insane. It has cast a shadow in the heart, in the sunlight of every good tender man and woman. I say, let us rid the heavens of this monster, and write upon the dome 'Liberty, Love, and Law.'"

Judging from my recent experience in America and Canada, Freethought as an organization has not improved in either of those places. Individual Freethinkers are very numerous, but it appeared to me that they failed in mutual co-operation. In my opinion, one of the causes of this lack of organized force is that Secularism is allowed to be hampered with such questions as Free Love, Socialism, and other subjects which should have no connection with Secular advocacy, the function of which is to war with theology, to seek to destroy priestcraft, and to construct an ethical system upon a rational basis.

Speaking generally, I think that fair progress has been made during the last few years in America towards securing the political rights of women. Personally, I am of opinion that well-arranged political power should be given alike to man and woman. They have both to obey laws and to contribute to the national expenditure; therefore, it is but right that each should have a voice in the making of legal enactments, and also in the disbursements of the public money. There is no doubt in my mind that, if womanly influence—enriched as it is by unequalled purity, and augmented by unsurpassed devotion—were allowed its legitimate scope in the field of politics, the State atmosphere would be healthier than it is, and the actions of law-makers would be free from much of that duplicity and unjust favoritism which now too frequently disgrace them. It is a mistake to suppose that woman, as a rule, would sacrifice her home duties to fulfil her national obligations. Possibly there may be isolated instances where this would happen, as it occurs now in the case of man, where he has not learned how to wisely and fairly perform his duties. A properly-educated woman would know that her first, but not her only, concern should be to preserve comfort and harmony at home—that is, the temple of domestic bliss of which she is pre-eminently the priestess. For a wife and mother to neglect her home is to ignore the instincts of her nature, and to set at defiance the obligations laid upon her by the natural conditions of life. No good woman would be guilty of thus violating the essentials of all domestic happiness. Briefly, her right position is to be, not a slave to, but a companion of, man, and nothing will prepare her for that companionship better than knowledge, and a wise application of it to all the duties of life. Hitherto wives have been too much deprived of that dignity and equality to which they are justly entitled. America is leading a noble reformation of this wrong: let Englishmen join heartily in the necessary work. The interesting object of our labors has proved deserving of our efforts, and will amply repay us for the faithful performance of our duty.

Well, Mr. Foote and myself will, in a few days, be home again, feeling physically the better for the sea voyage. We shall then be able to resume our labors in the land of our birth. While retaining very pleasing recollections of the kindness and attention shown us by many of our brothers and sisters "across the sea," we shall turn our attention to the work nearest to hand. Profiting by experience, we hope to do more than ever to advance the good old Cause in this land of ours. Returning, as we shall, upon the eve of the festive season, we hope to join all the readers of this journal in spending a Merry Christmas, and in sharing with them in the advantages of a Happy New Year.

CHARLES WATTS.

ACID DROPS.

As the time "draws near the birth of Christ," the pulpits resound to the tune of "Peace on Earth and Goodwill to Men." The original reading was "to men of goodwill." But no matter. Peace is now on the lips even of those who were recently howling for war with Turkey. Christianity has no real guidance in this or any other important matter. On the one hand, it inculcates a submission to evil, by which oppressors would benefit; while, on the other, Jesus said he came not to send peace, but a sword, and significantly told his disciples, "He that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one."

It is these sayings of Christ that have been fulfilled in history, which is one red record of strife and bloodshed. Christianity has ever been ready to use the sword, from the time of Charlemagne, who gave the Saxons the option of baptism or death; from the time of Constantine, who made the cross the military emblem; from the time of Peter, who so deftly drew his weapon and smote off the ear of Malchus—a sufficient proof he did not rely on the power of prayer.

Christianity has spoken for centuries of peace and goodwill, and the steel bristling, snarling, armed nations of Christendom tell with what success. It has had every chance. Wealth, privilege, and power have been at the service of the one divine and infallible religion. It has had myriads of trained servants, and the complete control of education; yet war is not extinct, but still exacts its yearly toll of blood and treasure.

Peace Sunday follows on the heels of the announcement that the army is to be increased by eight new battalions of infantry, five hundred additional horses for cavalry, and eighteen new field batteries of four guns each for the Royal Artillery.

Christianity takes the gospel of peace and goodwill to the heathen. Her missionaries dilate on its message of divine love. And the heathen see the Christian Gospel followed by the Maxim gun, and find the missionary a prelude to an expedition to rob them of their lands. The story of Christian treatment of heathen races is one so black and bloody that it should fill every preacher of Christian missions with shame.

The pagan Augustus Caesar kept the peace of Europe with an army which the Kaiser Wilhelm would count ridiculously inefficient. The number of soldiers in Christian Europe is close upon twenty-two millions. On a peace footing nearly four millions are constantly under arms. The direct cost of the armies and navies of Europe is over two hundred millions yearly, and the interest on war debts amounts to as big a sum.

The truth is that, unlike other faiths, Christianity takes no real hold of its followers. As Emerson said, "In pagan times every Stoic preached Stoicism. In Moslem lands every inhabitant is a Moslem. But in Christian countries where is the Christian? An impossible creed generates hypocrisy."

We have received the prospectus of the third edition of a popular manual of devotion, entitled *God and I*. Cardinal Wolsey was taken to task for his excellent but uncourtly Latin, *Ego et rex meus*; but this is nothing to the association of the Creator of the universe and its myriads of suns and planets with his ephemeral worshipper. No wonder *God and I* is popular. To some folks, God and the universe combined only make up the little dot over the i.

The prospectus gives the endorsement of *God and I* of the Lord Bishop of Liverpool, and many other eminent God and Iists. Canon Prothero wants a dozen copies of *God and I* sent to him at the Sanctuary; Canon West says: "Please send me twelve copies of *God and I*, as before"; the Rev. A. B. Browne, rector of Bradfield, says he has placed *God and I* on his study table. The only trouble about *God and I* is to tell which is which. Does not the great mystic Angelus Silesius say?—

God in my being is involved
As I in the Divine;
I go to make His Being up
As much as He does mine.

God and I reminds us of a Truthseeker anecdote. A bishop of a northern diocese wrote to a publisher in New York for a book called *New and Contrite Hearts*. In a short time he received a postal from the publisher, saying: "We have no 'New and Contrite Hearts,' neither are there any to be found in New York." The northern prelate, it is said, enjoyed sending the postal to the Bishop of New York, calling attention to the state of his diocese.

The following items of clerical intelligence are cut from the last number of the *Truthseeker*: "The Rev. James C. Hull, Methodist, of St. Paul, Minn., on trial for poisoning his wife, has confessed that he sought her death in order to obtain the insurance on her life. He was sentenced to six years in the State prison at Stillwater."

"A vigilance committee is after the Rev. Horace Keeley, late pastor of the Congregational church at Millville, New York. He left his wife with child, and eloped with a young girl. It is reported that Keeley is preaching in Boston under an assumed name."

"The Rev. Oliver J. Booth, a talented minister of the Episcopalian Church and an able magazine writer of New York, was taken to the Bellevue Hospital suffering from alcoholism. Drink caused his downfall some years ago, when he was preaching in Montreal, Canada."

Candidates for confirmation at Grantham parish church receive a paper of instruction, *How to Make your Confession*. In the examination on the Decalogue the Second Commandment is illustrated by such questions as, "Have I read dangerous books, attended dissenting services, gone to fortune-tellers? How often?" The Sixth Commandment, "Have I committed murder, tried to commit suicide? How often?" Some of the questions on the Seventh Commandment are brutally direct, others eminently suggestive.

The children are also taught the duty "to contribute to the support of our pastors," and "when you have mentioned all your sins," says: "I most humbly ask pardon of God, and of you, my father, penance, advice, and absolution." This is the sort of thing our sacerdotalists mean when they advocate religious training.

The Rev. Arthur Cocks, vicar of St. Bartholomew, Brighton, states that in the course of the year between 4,000 and 5,000 confessions were heard in that church, of which he himself heard about one-third.

Captain C. Percy Bushe, R.N., writes to the *Standard* of December 9, concerning Sir Richard Burton, whom he knew intimately: "He appeared to have no religious convictions whatever. At the same time, he showed no animosity against any sort of religion except one—the religion of his wife." He mentions Burton's having laughed at his wife's private shrine, and on the occasion of a "fall-out" threatened "he would pitch her joss-house out of window."

A Baptist Boanerges at Burnley preached on the subject of "What will you do with Jesus?" The answer was supplied not long ago at Manchester. A man proclaimed himself to be the Christ. He was brought before a magistrate, who ordered that the state of his mind should be inquired into. He is now in a lunatic asylum.

We remember a good old Methodist minister who used very often to say: "The question is, What would Jesus do in like circumstances?" It used to be said that he once fell on a slide and ripped out an oath, following it by his favorite saying.

This reminds us of another story. Dr. Thirdly was invited to early dinner by the Squire of the parish, who never attended church. Anxious to be in time for the soup, the man of God instructed the clerk to cut the responses as short as possible. All went well until the parson "tackled" the litany, which he did at racing speed, allowing so little time between the responses that the clerk found great difficulty in keeping pace. At last said the pastor with terrible quickness: "Lord, have mercy upon up!" To which the clerk responded, "Christ ditto!"

A controversy has been going on for some time in the *Folkestone Herald* on "The Roman Church and the Bible." The Protestants show that the Catholic Church did its utmost to keep the people in ignorance and hinder the circulation of the Bible. The Catholics show that the Scriptures are hard to translate, and contain much matter hard to be understood and unsuitable to many people, and that they lead to all sorts of fanaticism and heresies, each claiming to be founded on the word of God.

Father O'Gorman, prior of Austin Friars, Hythe, puts the case against the indiscriminate use of the Bible pretty plainly. He points out the discrepant view of Protestants, who build on books that themselves rest on tradition. He mentions that the Mormons petitioned the Government at Washington, on the ground that their much-cherished polygamy had the full sanction of the Bible. Catholics and Protestants are both right in nullifying each other's claims.

The Exeter Branch of the English Church Union, horrified at the disclosures concerning the infidelity of Dean Fremantle and Archdeacon Wilson, has petitioned the council

of the E.U.C. to take such action as will cause those infidel opinions to be condemned by Church authority, and their authors made amenable to Church discipline. The Council has lamely and tamely replied that they "do not see what steps could usefully be taken."

One great crime of Archdeacon Wilson, according to the Rev. H. P. Burdett, of Exeter, is that, in a speech at the opening of the Manchester Crematorium, he said that the resurrection of the body was no part of the Catholic faith. This doctrine is an integral part of the Apostles' Creed.

The Government of Ceylon has found it necessary to make sanitary regulations regarding pilgrimages, in consequence of the spread of infectious diseases, especially cholera. The natives and Moslems take the regulations calmly, but the Christian Catholics are in a fever of indignation.

The American Sunday-school Union, Philadelphia, offers \$1,000 in two sums—\$600 for the best book, and \$400 for the next best book, written for the Society upon "Forming and Maintaining Character on the Principles of the Bible." The manuscripts must be submitted to the committee on publication on or before October 1, 1897. Let us hope the essays will not offer Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, or any other of God's favorites, as divine examples.

The Diocesan Synod of the Anglican Church at Edinburgh appointed a committee to trim the "damnation clause" of the creed called after St. Athanasius. The *Church Times* says: "It is to be regretted that the use in public worship of this venerable formula of the faith should be brought in question again. For, while acquitting the speakers at the Synod of any unsoundness as to the doctrines it contains and expounds, we cannot forget that, at the bottom of the agitation which has been aroused against it at different times, there is not the mere reluctance to bear its severe monitions, but a dislike of the truths which it enshrines."

The truths enshrined in this beautiful creed are such statements as that "The Son is of the Father alone: not made, not created, but begotten. The Father Incomprehensible, the Son Incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost Incomprehensible. And yet there are not three incomprehensibles, but one incomprehensible." Talk about *God and I*; the author of the Athanasian Creed must have been as intimate with the Deity as though he had been present at his dissection.

Dr. Cameron Lees, of St. Giles's, Edinburgh, is reported to have said recently that he had noticed that when men had had a good dinner and had drunk well, and when their feelings came to the surface, they always gave a cordial response to the toast of "The Clergy." It would seem they need the unholy spirit before they appreciate the holy ones.

During the service in the U.P. church at Cumnock, on Sunday, the plaster ornament in the centre of the ceiling of the building fell with a crash. The church is a good enough place in which to face danger, but most of those present thought the outside would do as well.

A new kind of Shorter Catechism was tried in a Sunday-school not far from the city the other evening, and a lady teacher got a "gliff" she won't get over in a hurry. She was pleasantly teaching how the young idea should spend the Sabbath, when it occurred to her, probably out of curiosity, to ask how the family belongings of a little girl put in the time. "What does your mother do on the Sunday, Lizzie?" "Lies in bed wi' the wean." "And your father?" "Maks the breakfast, and gangs tae the stables tae play at caids." "And your lodger?" "Lies in his bed a' day readin' the *Weekly Blazer*." No more questions were asked.

The Sunday Act of the pious Charles II. has often been called obsolete. But no law is obsolete until it is repealed; and bigots who drive to church on Sunday, and hold stock in railways or breweries which make profit on the Lord's Day, or rather the pagan day substituted for the Lord's Day, can use the old Act as a means of persecuting their neighbors.

Bocking parish church, Berkshire, has had a partial collapse of the roof. The rector, Dean Carrington, is enjoying himself at Monte Carlo.

The Rev. B. Wilder, rector of Great Bradby, was out cycling, when a gamekeeper in the road bewildered the Rev. B. Wilder and upset him. The man of God thereupon kicked him. Cross summonses were taken, but the case against the gamekeeper was dismissed, and the man of God was fined.

Sir John Bridge again declined to grant bail in the case of

the curate Winnifurth and Mrs. Hern, who are charged with perjury; so they have, at any rate, a second week in Holloway.

The Rev. Mr. Edmond, rector of Thornton-le-Moor, Lincolnshire, refused to pay the Market Rasen grocers who supplied him with provisions, on the ground that they were for the use of his wife, who kept a farm. Among the articles supplied was condensed milk. Mr. Justice Lawrence told the defendant he did not believe him, and he was ordered to pay the bill and costs.

In the mystery play of *The Pilgrim's Progress* the part of Christian is to be taken by Miss Grace Hawthorne. It is characteristic of the religious drama that it should give the opportunity to pious people of seeing a woman's legs in masculine garb.

Apropos of The Pilgrim's Progress, a burlesque has already been suggested, under the title of *Apollyonaris; or, A Playful Mystery*.

We are likely to have, after the mystery play, a revival of Biblical opera. Handel's *Esther* was performed in 1732 with dresses, scenery, and action. Rameau set music to Voltaire's *Samson*, but it was prohibited. However, Saint Saens' *Samson et Delilah*, like Massenet's *Hérodiade*, has been a great success on the continent, and many music lovers wish to have these works represented here.

What makes sacred music? No other answer can be given save that of association with a religious theme. Wagner's *Tannhauser* is in spirit more sacred than Mehul's *Joseph*; yet the one is supposed to be fitted for the Sabbath, and the other, as having a profane subject, only permissible on week days. Many English hymn tunes are taken from profane German volkslieder, and even dance music has been made religious by an alteration of its time.

The Bishop of Hereford's assault on the attire of the New Woman reminds us that it was the Ritualist priests of "the third sex" who led the way in adopting petticoats, embroidered lace, and colored garments.

The church committee that investigated the conduct of the Rev. F. L. Allen, of Henniker, N.H., elicited information which certain members would probably have preferred to receive in private. The reverend gentleman acknowledged his improper relations with many women of his congregation, among them the wives of some of the men who were trying him.

The Rev. A. M. de Villiers, lately the popular minister of Hartebeestfontein, in the Transvaal, suddenly resigned, and immediately after a young girl, a member of his congregation, stated on her death-bed at Klerksdorp that the man of God was the father of the child to which she had just given birth. Another girl member is also said to be enceinte by him. The Rev. A. M. de Villiers is a married man. The *Cape Times* says: "The farewell sermon of the Rev. A. M. de Villiers was preached amidst abundance of weeping. His text was Deut. xxx. 19: 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.'"

Mr. J. E. Remsburg, in the *Truthseeker*, illustrates the inerrancy of the Bible and the remark of Dr. Cheever, that it does not contain "the shadow of a shade of error from Genesis to Revelation," by comparing the census of the Jews in Ezra ii. with that in Nehemiah vii. He finds no fewer than twenty discrepancies and errors within the compass of these chapters. Twenty errors in forty-three numerical statements make rather a poor show for an infallible Ghost.

Theodore Parker used to pray to "Our Father and our Mother which art in Heaven." He was turned out even from the Unitarian Church. Yet here is the Rev. F. Platt, B.A., having first place in the December number of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* with a meditation on "The Motherhood of God," with, of course, the usual citation of the comparison by Jesus of himself to a hen gathering her chickens under her wings. We wonder the rev. gentleman did not refer to the Apocalypse, which describes the Son of Man as "girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

Of course the Rev. F. Blatt, B.A., is a young celibate. It is a curious fact, and one which speaks much for the reign of the New Woman that all the newest heresies make out that God is bisexual or female. It is a cardinal article of the creed of the Shakers, Koreshans, Jezreelites, and followers of T. Lake Harris. Protestantism, with its bachelor God, does not seem to satisfy the religious instinct catered for by the Catholics in their worship of the Virgin Mary, who, in actual worship, occupied a place above God the Father, God the Son, and the originally feminine Ghost, combined. The reason for this, we venture to think, lies deep down in

human nature and human history. The mother is the earliest and holiest of human worships. Perhaps no more curious sidelight on Christianity is to be found than that cited in *Footsteps of the Past* with regard to the worship of the matrix by the Nazarenes of Syria.

The alliance of Bible and Bung is again shown by Lord Mostyn having obtained permission to transfer the licence of the Mostyn Arms Hotel at Llandudno to a new hotel shortly to be erected, his intention being to convert the older building into a vicarage for the incumbent of Lanrhos.

The faith-healers are again in trouble, a famous Kansas lady having put herself into the hands of the Christian scientists and succumbed.

Living by faith is easy, many making a good pile from the faith of others. Living on one's own faith is more difficult. Even his Grace of Canterbury will hardly try that. He is, they say,

So proud that should he chance to meet
The twelve Apostles in the street,
He'd turn his nose up at them all,
And shove his Savior 'gainst the wall.

Eight hundred people assembled on the slopes of Table Hill, Grahamstown, to pray against cattle disease. Says the *Sydney Bulletin*: "South Africa is setting aside a day of humiliation and prayer to root out the rinderpest. Australia should promptly counteract this by appointing a day of thanksgiving and praying for its continuance, as the South African meat supply will soon run out and give our meat a show."

The *New York Sun* says the growing sentiment of Protestantism "demands the abolition of hell." What, then, asks the *Catholic Times*, will become of the Devil? We suppose he will transform himself into an angel of light.

S. A. Justice Boucaut said the other day: "Who does believe in the inspiration of the Bible?" And still they "kiss the Book" before him.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

The adventures of Wilhelm Tell used to be included in the public school books of Switzerland. When the story was shown to be a myth they excised it from public teaching, although it inculcated patriotism. When will other governments be wise enough to act in a similar manner towards less useful myths?

W. J. Clark, of the Domestic Mission, Birmingham, appeals for a Christmas Distress Fund for "the deserving poor of all creeds and of no creed." This is good. Brother Jasper is right—"The world do move."

It is still common to say that Mohammed succeeded by the sword, though Carlyle pertinently remarks that you must first get your sword. But Islam now-a-days is spreading rapidly through Central Africa, Malay, and in the western provinces of China by the peaceful means of Moslem colonists and traders, who invariably fraternise with the people, while the white Christian as constantly holds himself aloof. The Rev. T. W. Arnold, in his *Preaching of Islam*, confesses that the religion of "the Arab thief," as C. Wesley called the prophet, is making up by peaceful conquest in Africa and Asia what it has lost in Europe.

It is sought to keep the supply of teachers orthodox by taking them solely from the sectarian colleges, the cost of which comes mainly out of unsectarian pockets. Dr. McGaw recently showed that the State pays 70 per cent. of the cost of these colleges, and the students themselves 17 per cent. A few stray pounds come from miscellaneous sources, and only 8 per cent. is provided by the friends of denominational education.

St. James's Gazette (December 15), noticing the "warning to householders" issued from Scotland Yard, says: "Burglars, we fear, will have to take to the Salvation Army and become 'trophies.' Their occupation will soon be gone. N.B.—Beware of the burglar in disguise as a Salvationist, and insist on the production of his tamborine."

What a joke is Bramwell Booth's attack on Herbert Spencer! The philosopher will take no notice of the insect, so it makes a second bite in the *Times* of December 15, objecting especially to the author of the Synthetic Philosophy that he finds that "to believe in a divine consciousness men must refrain from thinking what is meant by consciousness."

A divinity student, asked to give the context to the words, "To your tents, O Israel," says that that was what prophet Moses said to the Jews when he foresaw that rain was coming.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 27, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road.
(Mr. Charles Watts in the chair.)

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.

J. LOCKWOOD.—You may learn all about Christmas customs in Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past*.

A. GARNER.—Exodus xxxi. 17 is the passage you mean. It says that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." What refreshment he took is not stated.

N.—The N. S. S. was started in 1867, with Mr. C. Watts as its first secretary. Its first Conference was held at Bradford in November of that year. Since then the Conferences have been held on Whit-Sunday. The *Secular Almanack* is now in its twenty-eighth year of publication.

A. V. PINNOCK.—Many thanks for cutting.

G. CRUDDAS.—We got your letter on Friday. Pleased to hear Mr. Cohen has been so successful.

DICK.—Creditable for first attempt, and, having the merit of brevity, may find a corner.

T. DUNBAR HARRIS.—Well, but busy. Cuttings ever welcome.

J. CARLAW.—Too long. Like Hooligan's foot, 'twould have been a beautiful thing if it didn't require so much room.

C. D.—Many thanks for paper.

W. C. MCBAIN, Glasgow.—In Avizandum.

W. CLOGG.—Hope Mr. Ward is improving in health.

TYNESIDER.—(1) Anthropologists differ in opinion as to whether the white, brown, black, or yellow race came earliest. (2) Certainly December 25 may be called Christmas Day, or March 25 Lady Day, without thereby implying that Christ was then born, or the Virgin Mary then visited by the holy pigeon.

J. G. BARTRAM.—We hope the people of canny Newcastle will see through the attempt of the wealthy Methodist Alderman to deprive them and their posterity of the freedom of reading their own books on Sunday. Pleased to note your efforts.

H. SHARP.—All critics are agreed that the book of Ecclesiastes is not by Solomon. It is one of the latest books of the Jewish canon. Nor is there any evidence that Solomon was author of any part of the book of Proverbs. See "Davidson on the Canon," and the articles on the various books in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. We cordially agree with you in admiring the papers of "Abracadabra."

AMERICAN FUND.—West London Branch, £1; Mrs. B. E. Marks, 5s.

LECTURE FUND.—Mrs. B. E. Marks, 5s.

BENEVOLENT FUND.—Mrs. B. E. Marks, 10s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Crescent—Consett Chronicle—Daily Mail—Standard—Folkstone Herald—Truthseeker—Children of the Hour—Newcastle Leader—Daylight—Boston Investigator—Fur Unseer Jugend—Open Court—Froidenker—Sydney Bulletin—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—Torch—Freedom.

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 Monday, 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.

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

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

SPECIAL.

MR. FOOTE, who, by the time this number is in the hands of our readers, will be re-crossing the herring-pond, will lecture in the Athenæum, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday, December 27. Mr. C. Watts will take the chair. All their friends should endeavor to attend and give them a hearty Christmas welcome.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OUR next number, the last issued before the Editor's return, will be a Christmassy number, at the regular price. It will contain a curious article on the Festival, by Hsiang Foo, a Chinese Buddhist, which we have entitled "O Clismas"; a paper on "Christmas Trees and Tree Worship," by Mr. Wheeler; a poem by Mr. Mackenzie, entitled "Christiana; or, God's Lamb and Man's Goose"; and much merry matter suitable to the season. It will be published on Wednesday, and all Guide Notices must reach us on Monday. The first issue for the New Year will contain an excellent portrait of that noble Freethinker, Harriet Martineau.

The *Boston Investigator*, in its account of the Chicago Congress, says:—"The addresses of Charles Watts and George W. Foote, in response to America's welcome, were in full sympathy with the auspicious occasion. Cheer after cheer greeted their telling points. England could not have given us better representatives of her progressive people. They have cemented the fraternity of the Old World and the New. In every respect this has been a great Congress; and Freethinkers can look upon its results with pride and hope."

Lucifer, of Chicago, has a very high opinion of Mr. Foote's oratory. The following is from its account of the Liberal Congress:—"George W. Foote came next, and he raised the enthusiasm of the audience to a white heat. No one who has not heard him speak can realize Mr. Foote's influence upon an assemblage of intellectual men and women. One feels that he is in dead earnest, that he understands his subject, and that he is prepared to say what he thinks, no matter who or what opposes. When he rises to his feet, and the first notes of his vibrant voice strike the ear, a thrill runs through the nerves of his auditors, and thenceforward he has undivided attention, until at the close of his ringing peroration he takes his seat amid a whirlwind of applause that does not subside until the orator has risen again and acknowledged the spontaneous and tempestuous tribute to his eloquence."

Mr. Snell had a crowded house at the Athenæum to witness his lantern illustrated lecture on "Charles Bradlaugh: Atheist and Reformer." Many portraits of Mr. Bradlaugh's colleagues were shown, including a photo of Mr. Foote taken in America. A gentleman of the Christian Evidence Society courageously opposed, and was readily replied to. This Sunday Mr. Heaford takes the platform and deals with the old heresies of Dr. Temple and his path from *Essays and Reviews* to the Primacy. Mr. Heaford is an energetic and painstaking lecturer, who, we hope, will be well supported.

Mr. Cohen's visit to Oxhill and Stanley has been so successful that he has been asked to return in the beginning of the year. His audiences increased from three hundred to a thousand. It is evident from the local papers that he has made a considerable stir in the district. The *Consett Chronicle* reports his lectures, and devotes an article to them.

The Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged to have a knife and fork tea and concert in the Northumberland Hall on Sunday, January 3, 1897. The monthly meeting of members will be adjourned to that date, and will be held at 3 p.m. Tea at 5, concert at 6.30. Tickets (1s. 6d. each, children 6d.) may be had from members of the committee, or from Mr. Peter Weston, 77 Newgate-street.

The *Academy*, which has departed from its excellent feature of having signed articles, opens with a paper on "Tom Paine," founded on the fourth volume of the edition of his works edited by Mr. Conway. It says: "He has finally redeemed Paine from his traditional pillory: the screaming demagogue, the shrill infidel, the universal monster, no more exists; and in his place we find, if not a man of prime historical importance, at least a respectable and intelligible man 'of importance in his day.'"

The usually pious *Contemporary Review* gives the first place to an article on "The Progress of Mankind" by a notorious Atheist and Anarchist, Elisée Reclus. It deals with the comparative superiority of the civilised man and the savage. Mr. Reclus holds that, even for the real, intimate comprehension of nature, modern man can reconquer the past of the savage, and that humanity has, despite some retrogression, made substantial progress. He concludes: "Yes, humanity has really progressed, from crisis to crisis, and from relapse to relapse, since the beginning of those millions of years which constitute the short conscious period of our life."

There is talk of a Parliament of Religions being held in Japan. We also read of a project to send Buddhist scholars to Thibet to study Thibetan Buddhism and make a thorough

search for Sanskrit manuscripts. These are evidences of the awakening spirit of research in the land of the Rising Sun.

Tickets for the Freethinkers' Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant are now ready. We also call attention to Mr Forder's announcement *re* the Children's Party.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

JOHN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOSPEL EVENTS.

PAUL'S knowledge of Christ, as far as is evidenced by his four authentic epistles, amounts, as we have seen, to no more than the three simple facts—that Jesus was of the seed of David, that he was crucified, and that he was seen alive by many after his death. Paul *may*, of course, have been acquainted with all the events and precepts recorded in the Gospels; but before considering this question it will be convenient to first ascertain what was certainly known of these matters by the writer of the Apocalypse. This writer I will assume to be the apostle John, and in so doing I reject that individual's claim to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. My reasons for this assumption are manifold: (1) Because, since the book of Revelation is a first-century document, it is possible that it may have had an apostolic author—a fact which cannot be affirmed of the Fourth Gospel; (2) because the language of the two books shows them *not* to have been written by the same hand; (3) because the Apocalypse is intensely Jewish, while the Fourth Gospel is quite the reverse; (4) because the Revelation is just such a book as an ignorant, pretentious, and exclusive Judaizing Christian teacher might have written; (5) because I am always willing to admit any apologetic contention that is not altogether unreasonable.

Looking carefully through this book, then, we find mention only of the following matters:—

1. That Jesus Christ was "the root and offspring of David," the "faithful witness, the first-born of the dead," who hath "loosed us from our sins by his blood" (Rev. xxii. 16; i. 5).

2. That the "Lord" was crucified in that great city "which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt" (Rev. xi. 8).

3. That "one like unto a son of man," who had been dead, was "alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18).

4. That the Amen "also overcame, and sat down with his Father in his throne" (Rev. iii. 21).

5. That there existed somewhere a "book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8).

6. That on the foundation of the walls of the New Jerusalem were the names of "the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. xxi. 14).

It is not at all certain that the Lamb, the Amen, "One like unto a son of man," and Jesus Christ were one and the same person. Jesus of Nazareth was certainly not "slain from the foundation of the world," nor are we told in the Gospels that he kept a list of the saved in a "book of life." The writer of this pretended vision appears to have taken both his inspiration and his information from the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, 2 Esdras, and Enoch. He certainly does not evince the slightest knowledge of the events and sayings ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels, nor even of such important matters as the two Christian sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In short, the Apocalypse contains not a scrap of evidence tending to establish the reality of the Gospel events; on the contrary, what is said rather makes it doubtful as to whether the Jesus named in the book is more historical than the mythical "son of man" mentioned in the books of Daniel and Enoch.

Thus, judging by his silence, the apostle John—sad it is to relate—knew nothing of any of the sayings and doings of his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. For Paul, who never saw this wonderful personage, there might perhaps be some excuse; but for John, who is said to have been the disciple most beloved of Jesus, and to have leaned on his Master's bosom, there can be no extenuating circumstances. But even in the case of Paul we must bear in mind that that great teacher's missionary labors led him into all parts, and that he was in constant communication with the various Churches, and, further, that when he wrote his epistle to the Galatians he had been preaching for over

seventeen years (i. 18; ii. 1). He must, therefore, have heard a good deal of what was said of Jesus in his time. Besides, are we not told by Christian apologists, from the great Irenæus downwards, that Luke's Gospel contains the substance of Paul's preaching?

We have now to consider the argument drawn from the complete silence of these two Christian teachers with regard to the sayings and doings of Jesus. Now, in the first place, had these two apostles been acquainted with the commands and precepts ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels, they could not well have written long letters of doctrine, counsel, reproof, and instruction to the churches which they had founded, or of which they had the spiritual care, without either quoting or referring to them as the authority upon which their teaching was based. Yet neither of these apostles, even once, alludes to a single precept of his blessed Lord. Each writes as if there were no sayings of Jesus in existence, and no standard to which he could refer his converts but that of his own teaching. Each is a law in himself, and each preaches a different gospel. Paul holds faith only to be essential; John maintains that circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic laws are indispensable. Paul exhorts his converts to remain steadfast to his own teaching; John reproves or commends according to the neglect or performance of what he calls "works."

Thus, Paul tells the church at Rome to "mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling *contrary to the teaching which ye learned.*" But, had he been acquainted with the precepts attributed to Christ in the Gospels, he would doubtless have said "contrary to the teaching of the Lord Jesus," and would have reminded them of the words, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another," or of some other passage appropriate to the circumstances.

Similarly, the apostle John apparently knows nothing of any sayings of Jesus. To the church at Ephesus he says (ii. 2-5): "I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men.....But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works."

To the church at Pergamum he says (ii. 13, 14): "I know.....thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith.....But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam," etc.

To the church at Sardis he says (iii. 2, 3): "I have found no works of thine fulfilled before my God. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and didst hear, and keep and repent," etc.

To the church at Laodicea he says (iii. 15, 16): "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.....So because thou art lukewarm.....I will spew thee out of my mouth," etc.

Again, in his four great epistles the Apostle of the Gentiles gives no less than seventy quotations from the Old Testament, and in the majority of cases he cites them in support of his teaching. Had he, however, been acquainted with the sayings now attributed to Christ, he would, there can be little doubt, have quoted some of them, and not the Hebrew scriptures, as his authority for differing from the teaching of the apostolic party.

In strong contrast to these two apostolic writers are the Christian teachers who wrote in times when a number of Gospel precepts were known and received as the utterances of Jesus. Thus, the great Church dignitary, Clement, writing to the church at Corinth with respect to dissensions in that church, says (paragraphs xlvi. and xlvii.): "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: 'Woe to that man. It were better for him that he had never been born than that he should cast a stumbling block before one of my elect,' etc.....It is disgraceful, beloved, yea, highly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian profession, that such a thing should be heard of as.....sedition against your presbyters," etc.

The pious bishop, Polycarp, in his epistle to the church at Philippi, says (ch. ii.): "Remember what the Lord said, teaching: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven you,' etc."

Athenagoras, speaking of the practice of kissing among the "brothers" and "sisters" of the early Church, says (Embassy xxxii.): "We exercise the greatest care.....for the Lord said, 'If anyone kiss a second time because it has given him pleasure, he sins,' etc."

Two examples of Paul's teaching are given in the Acts (xiii. 17-41; xx. 18-35). This book, we know, was written after the Gospels; as a consequence, we find evidence of this fact in both. In the first example Paul speaks of the preaching of John the Baptist, and quotes the words: "Behold, there cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose." He also refers to the trial under Pontius Pilate, and the burial of Jesus. In the second he says: "Ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

The Paul of the epistles, however, appears never to have heard of any "words of the Lord Jesus." Writing to the church of Corinth, he says: "I beseech you, therefore, be ye imitators of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy.....who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, even as I teach in every church.....Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them unto you" (1 Cor. iv. 15-17; xi. 2).

Again, writing to the Galatians, Paul says (i. 9): "If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received [from me], let him be anathema."

To sum up, there can, I think, be little doubt that both the Apostle John and the Apostle of the Gentiles, had they been acquainted with a number of authoritative sayings which were accepted as the utterances of Jesus, would certainly have quoted or referred to them in writing to their respective churches, either in support of their statements (as was done, as we have seen, in the case of the Old Testament), or to remind some of the members that they were not acting or living in accordance with the commands or precepts of their Lord, or to establish some point of doctrine, or for some other reason. The complete silence of these two leading apostles upon all the Gospel sayings and events can only be explained either by their not knowing them, or not believing them. The latter alternative may be at once dismissed; for we know that *anything* was believed in apostolic times. It is not, then, unreasonable to infer that, had Jesus really said and done all that is related of him in the Gospels, these two apostles could not possibly have completely ignored them—as they undoubtedly do. The divine utterances of their blessed Lord, had these sayings been known, must have been cited times without number as an authority which no teacher of religion could question, and which nothing human could alter or subvert—as, in fact, the inspired words of God.

ABRACADABRA.

THE STORY OF SAMSON.

WITH distended eyes, mouth, and ears, Tommy Traddles heard his Sunday-school teacher tell about Samson and his long hair and his wonderful feats of strength, and his weakness after Delilah had shorn him of his leonine locks.

"An' he didn't have any strength at all after he got a hair-cut?" he asked, incredulously.

"No; his strength was in his long hair, and when his locks were gone he was powerless," explained the teacher.

When Tommy came the following Sunday his face was a trifle scratched, and one of his eyes was discolored. He had very little to say, but was evidently doing a great deal of thinking.

"Say, teacher," he said at last, "I don't think much of that Samson story you told us last Sunday."

"Why so, Tommy?" inquired the teacher.

"Oh, you see, Johnny Jones, he's bigger'n me, an' he's captain of the Young Rovers' Football Team, an' he wore his hair long, like all of those kickers. An' him an' me isn't good friends, an' last Tuesday me an' Jimmy Hawkins an' Bob White—we all caught him alone, an' piled on to him an' held him down, an' cut off all his long hair with ma's shears."

"That wasn't at all nice, Tommy," reproved the teacher; "but I suppose you were thinking of the story of Samson?"

"Yes, that was just what I was thinkin' of."

"And you thought his strength was in his hair?"

"Yes, 'm, that's just what I thought."

"Well, was it?"

"Was it?" Tommy cried disgustedly; "I met him all alone yestiddy. Was it? Say, just look at that eye!"—Harper's "Bazaar."

"Remember, Flos, we are all made of dust." Flos—"I don't b'leve it, else why don't we turn to mud when nurse bathes us?"

A GERMAN FREETHINKER.

THE imprisonment of Herr Bruno Wille, the leader of a Freethinking community in Berlin, has served to draw attention to his doctrines, which are sufficiently like those of many English Secularists to make them of interest to readers of the *Freethinker*. Herr Wille has long been in bad odor with the Imperial authorities, having set out in public life as a social reformer or Socialist, and having, like many others of that school, been impelled in the direction of Anarchism—meaning self-government, not dynamite. This has led to his condemnation by Bebel and the orthodox Socialists of Germany. His books, issued by the popular library created by *Vorwärts*, have been placed upon the Index, giving a hint of the possible treatment of Freethought works under a Socialist régime. The growing parliamentary importance of the Socialist party in Germany has caused an indiscriminate worship of parliamentary government, against which Herr Wille protests. He tells them, with Herbert Spencer, that golden law cannot result from leaden instincts, and that, to free men from servitude, their minds must be freed from superstition. "Let us," he says, "not break the heads of the old, but fill the heads of the young." And he has sought, by establishing a Freethought school and a free theatre, to carry out his ideas. "Transform the ideas," he says, "and the institutions will follow."

Dr. Bruno Wille's chief work is entitled *The Philosophy of Emancipation through Pure Means (Philosophie der Befreiung durch das reine Mittel)*. The title expresses his object. He detests the monarchy, the Church, and capitalism, but aims at the intellectual and moral elevation of the people, believing that without this the dominion of the masses would be as oppressive as the rule of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of a kaiser. "True happiness," he says, "consists in the feeling of perfect freedom. The truly free are those who conform their lives to reason. Earth will be a paradise when all men are perfectly reasonable and perfectly free—freie Vernunftmenschen." "The universe," he says, "needs no external deity to rule it. Nor should human order depend upon the State. Men and society, like the universe, should be self-regulating." "Reverse all the idols before which you have too long bent the knee," says Herr Wille, "and by the same blow you will suppress armies, police, tribunals, guns, swords, whips, chains, gaols, privileges, the exploitation of the poor by the rich, the tyrannies of capitalists, the jealousies of nations, and homicidal strife, masking its thirst of blood under pretence of patriotism." It will be seen that Dr. Wille is somewhat of an idealist and poet. Indeed, he has published a considerable number of poems. The militarism of Germany is finding its counterpart in German Socialism. Is it not a happy feature that it is also meeting a complete antagonism from the Freethinking section who range themselves under Dr. Bruno Wille?

H. JEWELL.

CHRISTIAN VIRTUE.

IT has been the custom to label every virtue as Christian which has been evolved as human, ages and ages before our own era, at which time every good thing was re-dated, christened, and re-named, as if it were the result of an historical Christ! Indeed, one expects to hear of the elements of pure air, fresh water, and clear sunlight being christened under this name, in the same way that the well-known healing by means of mental medicine, which was practised by the pre-Christian races, has been designated "Christian healing." We shall probably have Christian Lunacy or Christian Idiocy!

Yet the fact remains that the direct enemies of the human race in Europe have been the most besotted supporters of the doctrines called Christian. It cannot be too often repeated that the foundations of the Christian faith were laid in falsehood and ignorance. The Fall of Man in the beginning was not a fact, and consequently there could be no curse. It is but a fable misinterpreted; and the redemption of the New Testament is based upon the fable in the Old. There is no virtue nor efficacy in a vicarious atonement; and no priesthood ever had, or ever will have, the power to forgive sin, to break the sequence between cause and effect, or to evade the Nemesis of natural law.—Gerald Massey.

Children's Annual Party.

It is decided to give the annual entertainment to the children of Freethinkers early in 1897. To meet the expenses funds are needed; and the Executive having again appointed me treasurer, I venture to ask our friends to remember the little ones. A start has been made, and I hope to be able to send in a copious list of subscriptions next week. Balance from last year, 1s. 1d.; A. W. Marks, 5s.; Mrs. Marks, 5s.—R. FORDER, Treasurer.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE MASSES.

TIME was when the most faithful adherents of Christianity were the poor and the oppressed. At the outset the followers of the Nazarene were the outcasts and unrecognized of society. When the religion became fashionable, the educated and higher classes adopted its name, but left its principles to be worked out by their poorer brethren. Throughout the Middle Ages it was the peasant class who believed in Christianity; the more wealthy who fostered it in them.

The institution of Christianity (*per se*) involves a privileged class—an unproductive number who receive a University education, with all its attendant advantages, luxuries, and expenses, on purpose to proclaim worn-out platitudes, which never have any practical bearing on the harassing difficulties of ordinary life, except, perhaps, an occasional stunting or deadening influence.

The upper classes have always seen the necessity of imbuing the masses with Christianity, because it was an antidote to their progress, and consequent rebellion against the privileged. The divinely-inspired Book says distinctly: "Blessed are the poor"; "Blessed are the meek"; "Servants, obey your masters"; "The poor ye have always with you"; thus giving a holy sanction to existing conditions. From this it is concluded to be right—nay, more; it is appointed by God—that there should be a lower class, a submerged tenth; a class destined to eke out their existence in excessive toil; to wear out their souls in misery; to know no life but disease and privation, and powerless to see their children slowly murdered before their eyes through insufficient food, inadequate clothing, and crowded, unhealthy dwellings.

At length the toilers have ceased to put their faith in Christianity or its advocates. Even the doctrine of immortality has lost its charm. What value has a future life to one who has failed in this? Fresh opportunities for greater failures are not coveted by those worn down with the present. If God views with callousness and indifference the struggles and sufferings in this world, what guarantee is there that he will not do the same in the next? Now, there is no class so utterly indifferent to this religion as the workers. They have lost all reverence for the clerical order; they care not a pin's head for a man as a Christian, but judge his value as a man.

In its dying stages Christianity has made a wild effort to regain its lost power, to create an enthusiasm—a revival; but it was not the workers who responded to the appeal. Though the middle class unearthed a St. Bernard and transformed Mr. Gladstone into a latter-day saint in order to personify him, and made that statesman endeavor to awaken the emotions of Christendom for the suffering Armenians, the working classes remained inert. And why? They had intelligence enough to know that if a war occurred they would not only have to supply the money, but do the fighting too, while the bishops, clergymen, and ministers of religion prayed for them comfortably at home. The masses consider they have danced too often to the many tunes of this institution, and have already sacrificed too much for its maintenance. They have scant belief in the "love of the Gospels." Their concern is to gain justice for themselves.

As to the higher classes, their belief in a future world of rectification dulls their sympathies here. A divinely-appointed order of things must be right. Christianity seems to detract from their humaneness towards their fellows. The pale, wan faces of the men and women they pass every day in the street, their evident physical and mental suffering making existence a living death, often call forth less pity and less effort for amelioration from Christians than the vivisection of animals; and yet the suffering of the former is far keener and more cruel, because more prolonged.

But the working classes no longer believe. They have adopted an attitude of cynical indifference to all proceedings of Convocation or Presbytery. They do not support Church newspapers or attend churches. Little interest, also, do they take in "Christian Socialists" or "Labor Churches." The toilers believe such combinations to be incompatible, and rightly so. They can gain very little reform from Christians. Freethought is the herald of progress and denouncer of superstition. It is to Freethought alone that they can hope for support; Freethought which discards superstition, involving a privileged class; Freethought which proclaims equality of opportunity for all—the recognition of all men as brothers and all women as sisters in their endeavor to realize their own ideals, sympathizing with each other's weaknesses and failures, and rejoicing at each other's success; Freethought which values man as man, not as a member of any particular sect, or believer in any special creed.

F. A. UNDERWOOD.

"MADE IN GERMANY."

THE above has become a common saying of regret in this country, since the Germans now send us many articles which we formerly sent to them; and so do the French and Belgians. Let us be fair. Do we not send manufactures to all parts of the world? Thus the people of all the nations may cry out, "Made in England"; indeed, "made in England" in foreign countries has been a title of superiority to the article; and some try to palm off their wares as English by slightly altering the stamp on their goods to deceive the natives into thinking the goods are English—such as stamping cutlery "Rogers," instead of "Rodgers," the well-known house in Sheffield. The foreigner does not probably notice the want of the *d*, and thus is imposed on.

Manufactured goods now come into this country from Germany, France, America, and Belgium, and they could not come in if we ourselves did not buy them. So, you see, we are the cause of our own lamentations. Then how are we to find a remedy? Not in regrets, but in producing an article which our merchants will prefer to the foreign one, in price and quality.

The commercial traveller appears in a shop. He may be an Englishman employed by a foreign manufacturer, or he may be the polite foreigner himself. He opens his parcels, and the shopkeeper examines them and hears the price. Do you imagine that shopkeepers are so patriotic as to pay a higher price for an article because it is English than he could get the same article for from a foreigner? No; the competition with his next-door neighbor in the same line of business prevents him.

I have frequently heard regrets about foreign goods being imported into this country, hurting as it does our own people who pay local rates and taxes; but I have not seen the one who, when having to buy, considers anything but an article's quality and price.

We must look the facts in the face as sensible men, not as sentimentalists. There are two things which, if we could accomplish them, would materially assist us:—

(1) Get Continental workmen to arrange for shorter hours and higher wages, as to which, at present, they are not so civilized as Englishmen.

(2) Train up our boys as scientifically as Continental boys are trained; and to do this we must do as the Continentals have done—banish theology from their early training at school. In France there is no theology in the schools assisted by the State.

I sent three of my children to Germany to finish their education, and my son tells me that he found no theology in the courses he had to go through.

The time of the children on the Continent is not wasted in learning what they do not understand, and what is of no assistance to them in the battle of life. They therefore leave school with more secular knowledge and clearer heads. It is for the parents of the rising generation to consider this; for I do not suppose that the English nation is wanting in capabilities, if rightly trained. One fact shows the necessity of this, if we are not to descend to a second-class power: the exports of this country have not increased during the last twenty years; it is only by new markets having been opened up that a balance has been maintained.

GEORGE ANDERSON.

Pagan Charity.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that Pagan Rome did not know or did not practise almsgiving. Under the Republic large sums were often disbursed to secure popularity and influence; but towards its close philosophy promoted a truly philanthropic, instead of an ostentatious and selfish, expenditure—to succor widows and orphans, to redeem captives, and to bury the dead. From the beginning of the second century, State aid was bestowed monthly on the children of poor families.

When Antoninus lost his beloved but not very meritorious wife, Faustina, he founded in her honor a charitable institution for poor girls, who were termed *puellæ Faustinae*. The example thus given was followed by private individuals; and Pliny made many a noble gift during his life, known to us through his not possessing the specially Christian virtue of concealing his own good deeds.

A lady of Tarracina gave £8,000 to found an institution for poor children; and charitable legacies were not uncommon, and epitaphs were sometimes written which represented a dead man congratulating himself on having been merciful and a friend to the poor.—*Nineteenth Century*.

The Church hates the admirable Epicurus above all the other heathen sceptic sages, simply because he would abolish Churchmen.—*Sir R. Burton*.

The higher law of humanity bids us cast off the slough of old creeds, especially the obsolete and the debasing doctrine of degradation, the fall of man, original sin, redemption, salvation.—*Sir R. Burton*.

BOOK CHAT.

M. GOBLET D'ALVIELLA, in his *Migration of Symbols*, has traced the cross through history. The little book on *The Non-Christian Cross*, by John Denham Parsons (Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.), can, however, be safely recommended to those who wish to see the subject dealt with at length in reasonable compass. It not only gives much information on the origin and history of the symbol, but, in so doing, casts some shrewd glances at the origin of Christianity itself.

* * *

Mr. Parsons proceeds on quite different lines from M. d'Alviella. He starts with the very crux of the Christian question, Was the *stauros* of the gospels cross shaped? and he finds that the words translated "cross" and "crucify," both in the classics and in the New Testament itself, referred primarily to a stake, and not to anything necessarily in the shape of a cross. He then adduces the evidence of Minucius Felix that it was the Pagans, not the early Christians, who venerated crosses, and adds the testimony of Irenæus that Jesus lived to a good old age.

* * *

Mr. Parsons next enters into the question of the origin of the pre-Christian cross, which, he thinks, lay in its being "the simplest possible representation of that union of two bodies, or two sexes, or two principles, which alone produces life." The cross may be seen in the Egyptian rooms at the British Museum on some of the oldest tombs and mummy cases. It is there the *ankh*, or *crux ansata*, the Egyptian sign for life. It appears also in the *Papyrus Prisse*, the oldest known book in the world. It was doubtless as much a comfort to the Egyptian as the crucifix is to a Catholic.

* * *

The origin of the Christian cross is referred by our author to the adoption by Constantine of the old symbol, which he traces in various parts of the globe, including ancient Troy and Cyprus. He might even have found it in the new world in the carvings of Palenque. King Olaf, when keeping Christmas at Drontheim,

O'er his drinking-horn the sign
He made of the Cross divine,
As he drank and muttered his prayers;
But the Berserks evermore
Made the sign of the Hammer of Thor
Over theirs.

The only difference being that Olaf used the simple cross, and the Berserks used the fylfot. Each was supposed to guard from evil spirits.

* * *

Mr. Parsons does not enter into the question of the inscription over the cross. But antiquarians know that the "I. H. S." is Greek, and was a symbol of Bacchus; while Rosicrucians know that "I. N. R. I." does not stand for "Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judæorum," but for "Iamim, Nour, Ruach, Ibishah"—(Water, Fire, Air, Earth)—the cross symbolizing the equation of the four elements. In one of the very earliest known crucifixes, the ivory Diptych of Rambona, in Picenum, we have an evidently allegorical crucified figure, with a cruciform nimbus, an eye for a navel, and a male and female figure, labelled "Sol" and "Luna" to prevent mistakes.

* * *

Mr. Parsons gives a great deal of interesting information on the evolution of the symbol. There are, indeed, many forms of crosses, which will be found depicted in an article on "The Mystery of the Cross," which appeared in the *Freethinker* for April 10, 1892. But the cross that has figured most in history has been the cross which served as the hilt of a dagger left in the body of expiring liberty.

* * *

Hachette et Cie. publish *Jean Jacques Rousseau et les Origines du Cosmopolitisme Littéraire*, a study of the literary relations between France and England in the eighteenth century, which may be read with Mrs. Macdonald's *Study of the France of Voltaire and Rousseau*.

* * *

A Dr. Wiltzke has written a book entitled *Die Biblische Sunson der Ägyptische Horus-Ra*. Samson shows clear traces of a sun-myth, but is probably more easily identified with Herakles than Horus.

THE PERSIAN POET'S PHILOSOPHY.

OH, threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain—*This* Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the rest is Lies:
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

I sent my soul through the Invisible
Some letter of that After-Life to spell;
And, by-and-bye, my Soul returned to me,
And answer'd, "I Myself am Heav'n and Hell"—

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

Myself, when young, did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about—but evermore
Came out by the same door wherein I went.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hands wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn
I lean'd, the Secret of my Life to learn:
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—"While you live,
Drink!—for, once dead, you never shall return."

And fear not, lest Existence, closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more;
The Eternal Saki from that Bowl has pour'd
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make;
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

Some for the Glories of this World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

—Omar Khayyam, translated by E. Fitzgerald.

PROFANE JOKES.

A PORTUGUESE artificer, who was suspected of freethinking, was at the point of death. A Jesuit who came to confess him, holding a crucifix before his eyes, said: "Behold the God whom you have so much offended. Do you recollect Him now?" "Alas! yes, father," replied the dying man; "it was I who made him." Yes; and many more of them, too.

Teacher—"What was Cain?" Young Hopeful—"A tiller of the ground." Teacher—"Yes; but what would we now call a man who worked in a garden?" Young Hopeful—"A Chinaman!"

Two old darkies out West were heard to hold the following conversation: "Brudder Barnes, dere's bad noos agoin' round 'ere." "Wat's dat, brudder?" "Why, de Lord am dead." "Den how's de world agoin' round if dat's true?" "Well, anyhow, dere's bin a preacher around saying de Lord—dat's Jesus—am dead." "Oh, de Lord Jesus? Dat's no matter, dat's only one ob de boys. I fort ye meant de ole man."

Parson—"It is a judgment of heaven." Cocky (who has been burnt out twice)—"But I euchred it this time." Parson—"My good man, you cannot euchre the Almighty." Cocky—"Can't I! I had the darned place insured."

A country minister, and withal a dry preacher, who is in the habit of keeping his pulpit robe at home owing to the dampness of the session-house, was recently absent on a holiday. The manse being shut up, he was uncertain where to leave the garment. The problem was settled by a pawky chiel, a member of the session. Said he: "Ye canna dae better than keep it i' the poopit; it's the *driest* spot i' the kirk."

The question of the expediency of disbanding the militia company was being agitated one town-meeting day in a certain hamlet not a thousand miles from Boston. The tavern-keeper, a most pompous individual, who had courteously preserved silence during several noisy harangues, threw a final terrible bomb into the camp of the iconoclasts by the solemn interrogatory, delivered in his most impressive manner: "Gentlemen, let me ask you this, What could we do without militia in case of a resurrection?"

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, W. Heaford, "The Old Heresies and the New Archbishop."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, A. B. Moss, "A New Age of Reason." December 20, at 8.45, Social party and dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Dance and Entertainment.

EDMONTON (Theatre Royal): 7, Messrs. Manning and Thurlow—Debate on "Will Socialism Benefit Mankind?"

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, J. F. Green, "Patriotism."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The Vedanta Philosophy."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Gods Men Worship."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Ignatius Loyola."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): 7, Half-yearly general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, lectures.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, W. H. Whitney, "Sunshine and Shadow."

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherd's Hall): 7, Leon Dornbusche, "Christian Missions to the Jews."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Stanley Jones, "The Ascent of Man."

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): J. R. Wright, "My Religious Opinions."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class—D. G. Lindsay, "Civilising the American Indian"; 6.30, T. MacLeish, "A Tour in the West Highlands"—lantern illustrations.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Seth Ackroyd, "Tennyson and Modern Thought."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, C. Cohen, "Atheism: Its Meaning, Morality, and Justification."

LEEDS (Liberty Hall, Victoria-road): 3, Mr. Youngman, "Co-operation and Profit Sharing."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, J. Ross, "Human Knowledge and Religious Opposition."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Evans, "The Beginnings of Life"—lantern views.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Musical and other Recitals, etc. December 30, Members' and friends' Soirée and Ball. Tea at 5.30 prompt.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, W. Cook, "Saving and Waste."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—December 20, Leicester; 27, Camberwell.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—December 20, Balls Pond

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