

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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ANANIAS HUGHES AGAIN.

HERDER said—and Lecky gives it a melancholy half assent—that “Christian veracity” deserved to rank with “Punic faith.” From the primitive ages until the present day, the Christian Church has displayed a most astonishing incapability of distinguishing between truth and falsehood. The pagan moralists, and especially the Stoics, regarded veracity as the root of all other virtues. But the Christian teachers, like the “inspired” Christian writers, prefer to dwell upon the evils of drunkenness, fornication, and adultery. This is partly owing to the fact that Christianity, being founded on the fallen-angel theory of human nature, is essentially a revolt against the “flesh”; and partly to the fact that, from the very first, Christianity has always approved, and extensively practised, the art of lying for the glory of God; by which glory is really meant its own advancement and success. Ecclesiastical history, to borrow a phrase of Arnold’s, is a Mississippi of falsehood. The Gospels are forgeries, in the sense that they were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but are of entirely unknown authorship. Pagan writers have been cooked by means of interpolated passages in the interest of the Christian faith. Lying stories have been circulated wholesale about the characters and deathbeds of heretics, and “infidels” have been converted on paper who never had any existence in flesh and blood.

One of these converters of imaginary “infidels” is the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Most of our readers, and a good many other people too, will recollect how we ran to earth his fictitious story of the converted Atheist Shoemaker. When the damning nature of the evidence we accumulated against him was too apparent, he first carefully excluded every vestige of it from his own journal, the *Methodist Times*; then declined even to accept the adjudication of a court of honor; and finally posed before the Christian world as an ill-used man of God who was being persecuted by “infidels” for endeavoring to bring people to Christ.

Mr. Hughes is at the same old game again. He winds up a recent article in his paper in this style:—

“Mr. Holyoake has lived long enough to see all that was valuable and true in the Secularist movement absorbed into the active life of the Christian Church; and so far as that movement, contrary to his wishes, became anti-theistic, it is already dead. The late Mr. Bradlaugh’s headquarters in the city have passed into the hands of the Salvation Army, and the West London Mission now occupies the building in West London in which Mr. Holyoake, Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, and others, once taught. The active propaganda of Atheism has become an entirely negligible quantity in every part of the kingdom.”

We are sorry to brand all this as deliberate lying. We are perfectly satisfied that Mr. Hughes knows better. We have told him before that the Salvation Army has not acquired “the late Mr. Bradlaugh’s headquarters in the City.” Mrs. Bramwell Booth circulated a report to this effect through the press, but her object was evidently to raise £1,000. The report was so worded as not to be a direct lie, but only a lie by implication. Anyhow, the Salvation Army did not take over the premises. Yet the falsehood has gone the round of the world, and contradiction does not kill it; for, as Ingersoll says, nothing in this world flourishes like a good, sound, healthy, religious lie.

Mr. Hughes also knows, for he has been informed of it again and again, that Mr. Bradlaugh never had “head-

quarters in the City,” in the sense in which nine out of every ten readers would understand that expression. Mr. Bradlaugh himself did not own a brick of the building, neither did the Secular party; Mr. Hughes therefore crams two lies—one direct, the other indirect—into one half of a single sentence.

The allusion to Cleveland Hall, in the second half of the sentence, is positively sickening. Passing by the minor inaccuracy of representing Mrs. Besant as having ever “taught” there, we wish to observe that Mr. Hughes has been told again and again that Cleveland Hall had not been used by the Secular party for a great many years before it was engaged by the West London Mission. Mr. Hughes has also been told again and again that Cleveland Hall would have belonged to the Secular party but for the rascality of Christians, who maintain infamous laws that rob us as a party of the common rights of citizenship. To cheat us by means of these laws, and then to gloat over our losses, is an eminently Christian display of justice and charity.

Curiously enough, there is a circular letter lying (in both senses of the word) before us, signed by a King’s Cross-road evangelist, who begs financial support on the ground that, “through my instrumentality,” the headquarters of the infidel party have been closed, and that he incurred expenses amounting to £400 “in defending the action brought against me by the Atheists.” The Atheists brought no action against this person. He was neither a party nor a witness in the suit. And the idea of this poor creature closing any Freethought hall on the face of the earth is too ridiculous for criticism.

But to return to Mr. Hughes. He is perpetually declaring that Secularism is dead; whereas, if it *were* dead, there would be no need of such damnable iteration. Having said it was “already dead,” however, why does he say, only two sentences further on, that it is “an entirely negligible quantity”? A dead thing is no quantity at all.

Secularism has been “dead” ever since we knew it; nay, we heard it was dead *before* we knew it. It appears to die every three or four years, and sometimes oftener. But no one ever sees the funeral.

Mr. Hughes may possibly be ignorant of the present work of Secularism, but then his ignorance is culpable. We invite this infallible, peremptory preacher to learn the facts and confess his misrepresentations. We undertake to prove that Freethought journals circulate now as widely as they did while Bradlaugh was living; that, on the average, meetings are just as well attended; that more, rather than less, money is spent on propaganda; and that the Freethought movement itself, apart altogether from the accident of Bradlaugh’s struggle with the House of Commons, is as strong as it ever was, and is only prevented from becoming stronger by the disabling laws which Christians maintain against it. Those laws, however, while they cannot yet be repealed, may be circumvented; and if my Scheme, already to some extent explained in the *Freethinker*, can be carried out, as I believe it can, we shall get command of financial resources, in spite of the Christians. Meanwhile, I beg to remind Mr. Hughes that his trick of using Mr. Holyoake against Secularism, and, indeed, against every other leading Secularist, is not only weary, stale, and flat, but also unprofitable. It may mislead a few Methodists, who are not exactly fish for our net; but it will do no harm to anyone else, except perhaps to Mr. Holyoake, who may be well asked to be saved from his “friend.”

G. W. FOOTE.

SATAN RESUSCITATED.*

It may seem strange that at a time when *The Sorrows of Satan* is represented upon the theatrical stage, and the Devil himself is relegated to the realms of myth and utilized mainly as a topic of ridicule, his once potent majesty should be resurrected—not, as by Judge North, to point a moral, or, by Marie Corelli, to adorn a tale, but as a philosophical explanation of the phenomena of the universe. Yet this is the thesis of the author of *Evil and Evolution*, a striking book with a taking title, which has rapidly run into a second edition.

I am somewhat pleased with the popularity of the work, though totally opposed to the conclusions of the author; for I regard it as being in a large measure a very able argument for Atheism, none the less effective in that direction for being totally undesigned. The author holds that "for the belief in a Devil we have very much the same ground that we have for belief in God." In this I have the honor to agree with him. Both are natural inferences from the phenomena, when the human mind is in that stage of its evolution when it can only ascribe its surroundings to some being similar to itself. Gods and devils are alike created in the image of man, and if the benevolent aspects of nature warrant us in assuming the one, the malevolent aspects equally warrant us in assuming the other.

John Stuart Mill said: "In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's every-day performances. Killing, the most criminal act recognized by human laws, nature does once to every being that lives; and, in a large proportion of cases, after protracted tortures, such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their fellow creatures." The constitution of nature cannot warrant us in concluding the existence of a being at once all-good and all-powerful. The author of *Evil and Evolution* recognizes this, and, being evidently an amiable person, prefers to assume an all-good God of limited power, rather than an omnipotent one with limited benevolence.

The best parts of the book, in my judgment, are those in which the author confutes the many sophisms put forward by theologians to explain the origin and purpose of evil. Without entering into the question of free will, he points out that there are a whole multitude of evils with which men can have absolutely nothing to do—floods and storms, earthquakes, lightning-strokes, pestilences, often arising from natural convulsions, the blighting of crops by drought, their devastation by animal hordes, and so on. The theory of "Fatherly education" he shows breaks down, and so does the view that "maladjustment" is essential to evolution.

It is the merit of the author of *Evil and Evolution* that he does not seek to gloss over the difficulties which he evidently keenly feels. He tells how, as a youth, he held the theory that natural law "was the direct personal power of the Creator uniformly exerted." The idea was at first entrancing. He says: "It seemed to bring Providence into every detail of life, and to make it, indeed, a sublime necessity. I had, however, scarcely time to realize it before I dropped it again with a shudder. There came a grim story of a child falling on to a fire and being horribly roasted to death, and the frightful thought occurred to me, 'If gravitation is merely the direct exercise of the power of God, then it must have been God who drew that child down on to the fire and held it there.' I shrank in horror from the thought, and instantly dropped the belief."

Although, from its resolute facing of the facts, the work is, as I have hinted, well calculated to make atheists, the author is evidently a sincere theist, who has never overcome that tendency to interpret natural operations in human terms which is illustrated in this anecdote. He has never got over the childish error of judging natural processes by human standards. His reverence, instead of being directed to man, who has made the world worth living in, goes to some supposed creator, who is continually thwarted in his beneficent "designs" by the agency of a more powerful devil. It is rather optimistic sentiment than logic which induces him to believe that the good god will be finally triumphant and the evil one overthrown. For the fact is that what is inimical to man's individual existence is, in

the long run, triumphant. But our author will not draw the inference that all was not made for man's benefit. He prefers to assume that he knows that the original plan was beneficent, and then stern fact compels him to further assume that the original plan has been thwarted.

The author devotes a chapter to "Satan from a Scientific Point of View"; but there is more of Milton than of modern science in the chapter. Milton's Satan is certainly a lofty character, and our author suggests that "the imaginings of the real Satan, as the boldest conceptions of a finite intellect, must be expected to fall short of what is to us practically infinite." Modern science knows nothing of Satan, and its tendency is from dualism to monism; for it is exactly the same phenomena which to one class of beings may be described as good and to another class as evil. The disease which our author may consider as a maladjustment of microbes may to the microbes be an excellent adjustment, offering proof palpable of beneficent design. Chemical affinity converts food into nourishment, and as callously burns down a house full of shrieking inhabitants holding up their tortured limbs to heaven for mercy. Satan and God's work are so inextricably mixed that "you cannot tell t'other from which."

That good often comes from evil cannot be denied. But it is also true that evil comes from good. How often has generous praise ministered to vanity, and charity encouraged improvidence. Our author says: "Find me one man or woman who has been made gentle and good and strong by the evil around, and I will find you at any rate another in whom faith and hope have died out, and who has been embittered and hardened and degraded by it."

Life and its environment must be fairly adjusted, for the simple reason that any not so adjusted are crushed out even before they can leave offspring. Evolution means the remorseless elimination of the unfit—not the worst, but the worst adapted; the relentless crushing out of many lives to benefit a few. God, in all this, may be doing his level best; but it is a poor turn out to ascribe to Omnipotence.

The God of the author of *Evil and Evolution* seems to me a very pitiable individual, who, like the God of *Empedocles on Etna*, "fain would do all things well, but sometimes fails for strength," and who has a relentless antagonist ever ready to seize his little moments of weakness and put a fly into his pot of ointment. He wishes health to be general and contagious; but his adversary, the devil, makes disease catching instead. Such a deity may be pitied, but can hardly be adored. Compared with the author's deity or devil, man is so infinitesimal that it may be doubted if even pity would stimulate the average man to throw in his lot with God, in order to assist him in emerging the final victor. The truth is that there is no solution of the question of evil, on the Theistic hypothesis. The introduction of Satan only induces the question where the devil he came from. The resuscitation of Satan fails to extricate us from the difficulties which beset all theories of the supernatural. Satan, like God, instead of clearing up the old mysteries, would render them only still more profound.

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRISTIAN FAILURE; SECULAR SUCCESS.

It may not be out of place at this early stage of the new year to consider the position of Christianity, and the success of those principles which we, as Secularists, value so highly.

It is a favorite habit with a certain class of professed Christians to dilate upon the success of their organized efforts, and to sneer at what they term the poor results of Secular propaganda. But these self-satisfied critics overlook the important fact that the progress of any movement is not always commensurate with its organization. For instance, Christianity has for ages been thoroughly organized, and has had the advantages derived from wealth, fashion, and commercial interests; and yet, with all its well-planned machinery, it has proved an utter failure as a regenerating force among the general masses. The social condition of countries termed Christian is rotten to the very core. The fact of the existence in our midst of Socialism, the Labor party, and Anarchism, whose avowed object is the regeneration of society, is evidence that

* *Evil and Evolution: An Attempt to Turn the Light of Modern Science on the Ancient Mystery of Evil.* By the author of *The Social Horizon*. (London: Macmillan; 1896.)

Christianity has failed to secure for the people the justice, happiness, and personal rights which should be the accompaniment of the civilization of any nation. At the recent Conference of the National Union of Teachers it was shown that, from an educational standpoint, "we were confronted in our villages with a spectacle of neglect and dilapidation almost incredible"; and Mr. Arthur Sherwell, in his work, *Life in West London*, just published, reveals a condition of poverty and vice, side by side with the wealthy churches, which is truly appalling. The author gives the following picture of a room in Soho where human beings are found dragging through a miserable existence: "In a neighboring street a small back room was occupied by seven persons—viz., a family consisting of a man, his wife, and three children, and two (sometimes three) lodgers. A tenant in the same house gave information that part of the occupants stayed up gambling (which was always being carried on), while the others slept; but even then it seemed probable that some must sleep under the bed as well as upon it."

The truth is, the Christian system is a huge business organization, maintained for the purpose of perpetuating a useless and injurious superstition, and for supporting an unnecessary priesthood. The extensive character of its operations affords no proof of the value of the work it accomplishes. Principles must be judged by their intrinsic merits, and not only by their organized force. It frequently happens that adverse circumstances interfere with the organization of the greatest truths. This has undoubtedly been the case with Secular principles. Their advocates have had to cope with an ancient and deep-rooted superstition, and they have had to encounter cruel and relentless persecution. Moreover, their organization is still in its youth, and in its growth it has had to struggle against the drawbacks of poverty, prejudice, and unprincipled misrepresentation. Further, it has been necessary to struggle with, and, as far as possible, to overcome, the power of vested interests, and to endure the loss of legacies left for Secular propagandism, but which professed Christians have appropriated to their own use. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that our organization is limited and incomplete. For centuries Christianity was chaotic and lacked organized force, and even now its representatives are constantly complaining of its want of cohesion. Let Secularism have the same time and advantages that Christianity has had, and we shall have no fear as to the result of a comparison of the success of the two systems.

If, however, we cannot compete with our Christian opponents in organization, we have the satisfaction of knowing that Secular principles are progressing more rapidly in all phases of life than Christianity ever did. Our philosophy is not a mere name, or a fashionable profession; but it is an active factor both in private and public conduct. Even the orthodox religion itself is now sustained by such secular agencies as high-class singing, instrumental music, social parties, etc. The "simple Gospel" and the "blood of Christ" fail to draw congregations. The doctrines which were once regarded as the mainstay of the Church are losing all hold upon the intellect of the nation. The belief in Bible infallibility, in the existence of the Devil, the reality of hell, original sin, and total human depravity is no longer retained by the well-informed and intelligent section of the Christian community. Mr. John M. Bonham, in his work, *Secularism: Its Progress and its Morals*, quotes from a volume of Scotch sermons entitled *The Things which Cannot be Shaken*, in which are set forth the dogmas that have been relinquished in pious Scotland. The author of the last-named work, in speaking of the Christians belonging to his school, says: "The sections of that theology which treat of sin and salvation they regard as specially untenable. These sections comprehend the following dogmas: The descent of man from the Adam of the book of Genesis; the fall of that Adam from a state of original righteousness by eating the forbidden fruit; the imputation of Adam's guilt to all his posterity; the consequent death of all men in sin; the redemption in Christ of an election according to grace; the quickening in the elect of a new life (at their baptism, Catholics affirm—at the moment of their conversion, most Protestants allege); the eternal punishment and perdition of those who remain unregenerate." The same author, in commenting upon this, observes: "These sections of the traditional theology of Christendom—originally elaborated by Augustine,

amended and developed by the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, adopted wholesale by the Puritans—dominated the Christian intellect for centuries. They have ceased to dominate it. They no longer press on the minds and spirits of men like an incubus" (pp. 117, 118).

Similar indications of progress from theological domination are visible south of the Tweed. The "Higher Criticism" has revolutionized the ideas once held as to the nature and authority of both the Old and New Testaments; in politics now the main question considered is, not whether legislation can be sanctioned with "Thus saith the Lord," but will it be useful for the secular welfare of the people; while in our works of fiction Freethought commands a position it never did in former times. The large sales of such books as *Under which Lord? The Story of an African Farm*, *The Manxman*, *Trilby*, *The Heavenly Twins*, and others, show that theology does not hold the place it formally did in our light literature; and the acknowledgment by eminent divines of the decay of theology and the triumph of science is a striking and encouraging sign of Secular progress. Thus Canon Farrar says that science has had a "struggle for life against the fury of theological dogmatists," but "in every instance the dogmatists have been ignominiously defeated." A professor of divinity, preaching in the University of Oxford a short time ago, said: "The field of speculative theology may be regarded as almost exhausted: we must be content henceforward to be Christian Agnostics." And Dr. Temple, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, declared "that all the countless varieties of the universe were provided for by an original impress, and not by special acts of creation modifying what had previously been made" (see Samuel Laing's *Problems of the Future*, pp. 196, 197).

Mr. Laing also observes: "The tide is already running breast-high in this direction [of Agnosticism]. During the last half-century how many of the foremost men of light and leading have drifted towards orthodox Christianity, and how many away from it? Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Carlyle, Mill, all the great thinkers who have influenced the currents of modern thought, are men who had renounced all belief in the traditional theories of miracles and inspiration, and who, a few centuries earlier, would have been burned as heretics. The conversions have been all one way. Darwin and men of scientific training are not the only ones who have exchanged the old for the new standpoint. Conversions have been even more remarkable among eminent leaders in literature and philosophy, who were brought up in the strictest traditions of the old religious beliefs." Mr. Laing then mentions Carlyle, George Eliot, and Renan, all of whom rejected the orthodox faith, and he asks: "Where are the conversions that can be shown in the opposite direction? Where the leading minds which, bred in the doctrine of Darwinism, have abandoned it for the doctrine of St. Athanasius or of Calvin? The few eminent men who still adhere to the old theology, such as Cardinal Newman and Mr. Gladstone, are all of the old generation which is passing away. Where are their successors? Where are the rising naturalists who are to refute Darwin? Where the young geologists who are to dethrone Lyell? Where the Biblical critics who are to answer Strauss?" (*ibid.*, pp. 199, 200, 201).

If it be urged that modern progress is the result of Christianity, it may be asked, How is it that nearly all great reforms have been achieved during the present century amid the decay of orthodoxy and the advancement of Secular principles? And also, why was it that the Church opposed most of those reforms, and persecuted and imprisoned many of the leading men who initiated them? "By their fruits ye shall know them."

CHARLES WATTS.

When it is remembered that the old Israelites sprang from ancestors who are said to have resided near, or in, one of the great seats of ancient Babylonian civilization, the city of Ur; that they had been, it is said for centuries, in close contact with the Egyptians; and that in the theology of both the Babylonians and the Egyptians there is abundant evidence, notwithstanding their advanced social organization, of the belief in spirits, with sorcery, ancestor worship, the deification of animals, and the converse animalization of gods, it obviously needs very strong evidence to justify the belief that the rude tribes of Israel did not share the notions from which their far more civilized neighbors had not emancipated themselves.—T. H. Huxley, "*Evolution of Theology.*"

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

THE SYNOPTICS *v.* THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

ONE of the most remarkable of the facts revealed by a study of the Gospels is the wide difference between the sayings and doings of Jesus in the Synoptics and in the Fourth Gospel. The Jesus of the latter Gospel is, in fact, in everything except name a totally different person from the Jesus portrayed in the first three Gospels; hence, if one Jesus be historical, the other must of necessity be fictitious. It does not, of course, follow that either Jesus is historical; but when one Gospel account flatly contradicts the other three in matters which admit of no possible reconciliation, it becomes necessary, as a preliminary, to set one or the other aside before entering into further investigations. The first point, then, is to place the fact of this fundamental difference beyond the possibility of doubt; the next, to decide as to which Gospel or Gospels must be rejected.

We have seen in the accounts of the ministry of Christ in Galilee that the author of the Fourth Gospel makes Jesus go up twice to Jerusalem, and go twice to Cana; he also makes him work miracles, such as turning water into wine, healing a nobleman's son, and (greatest of all) restoring Lazarus to life after he had been dead four days—all of which were unknown to the three Synoptical writers, and are excluded by their accounts of the acts of Jesus during the same short public ministry. This Fourth Evangelist also places Bethany on the eastern side of the Jordan, represents events as having occurred at places which he calls *Enon* and *Sychar* (both unknown to Josephus, or to any other writer), and mentions a pool in Jerusalem which he names *Bethesda*, where, he says, an angel came annually and "troubled" the water (both the pool and the supernatural visitor being also unknown to Josephus, or to any other historian, or even to the Synoptists). These matters in themselves constitute an irreconcilable difference in the two conflicting accounts.

It is, however, in the language and teaching that the main difference between the two Jesuses consists. The language employed by the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is long, rambling, involved, full of silly quibbles, and largely metaphorical; while that of the Jesus of the Synoptical Gospels is, by comparison, simple, clear, and terse, and different in every respect. We cannot pass from the Synoptics to the Fourth Gospel without feeling that the transition involves the passage from one world of thought to another. The difference, too, is not merely one of coloring; it is a difference of words and ideas, of style and forms of thought. The artificial character of the dialogues and discourses in the Fourth Gospel must be apparent to every thoughtful reader.

In the latter Gospel Jesus is made to use a mystical language which the people do not understand, and his hearers are designedly made to misunderstand him, and to ask stupid questions, in order that, by being set right, the wisdom and superiority of Christ might appear greater by the comparison. The writer evidently intended to glorify Jesus at the expense of his hearers; what he has really done, however, is to make that personage speak and act like a lunatic; and, instead of attempting to instruct or enlighten the Jews, this new Savior appears to be perpetually wrangling and quibbling, and using language calculated to irritate and repel them.

As an example of this, in John iii. we read of one named "Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews," who came to Jesus by night to be instructed in the new religion. This instruction Jesus proceeded to give by telling his visitor that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This language is, of course, metaphorical, and every "ruler of the Jews" would, in this case, know it to be so; for the expression "being born again" was one employed by the Jews in the sense of becoming a convert to Judaism. Nicodemus, however, appears never to have heard of it, and stupidly asks: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" In answer to this idiotic question, Jesus, who in this Gospel cannot use plain language, says: "Except a man be born of *water and the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This explanation is no explanation at all; for the language is still metaphorical. Had Nicodemus been a Christian of

modern times, who had recently been keeping up the traditional birthday of his blessed Lord, he might have asked Christ's opinion of the different kinds of spirit, of the correct proportion of water to be added to each, and of the expediency of flavoring with lemon or sugar. Jesus would then have had a chance of explaining whether this was what he meant by being born of "water and the spirit." At any rate, whatever the meaning may be, Jesus does not explain it further than by saying: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." He might have added: "Neither do periwinkles bring forth guinea-pigs, nor cock-roaches boa-constrictors." Quite as much divine knowledge is evinced in the one statement as in the other. Of course Nicodemus had to go away unenlightened, for Jesus gave no further explanation. The three Synoptics, it is scarcely necessary to say, know nothing of a person named Nicodemus, or of a discourse about being "born again" with "water and spirit"; nor do they even know that Jesus ever made use of such expressions.

To take another example, in John vi. Jesus is represented as saying to the people: "Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth into eternal life." This language is, of course, metaphorical; but the Jews took it literally, and asked how they were to do this work. Thereupon Jesus said: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. . . . For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life to the world." This explanation, it will be seen, is still figurative, the "bread" being Jesus himself; but the people again understood the words literally, and said: "Lord, evermore give us this bread." Jesus then, for once, condescended to partially explain his meaning, and replied: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

But even now this Savior cannot speak plainly; for the words "cometh," "hunger," and "thirst" are employed in a metaphorical sense. Further on in this ridiculous discourse he says: "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea, and the bread which I will give is my flesh." The Jews, as before, misunderstand him, and say one to another: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" The only answer Jesus vouchsafes to this question is to mystify them still more by saying: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves"; and, after several times repeating this metaphorical nonsense, he actually leaves them without further attempting to make them understand his meaning.

On another occasion (John viii. 43) this ridiculous and most irrational Savior, after discoursing in the same absurd manner, says to his justly incensed and bewildered hearers: "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word." Here is a direct falsehood. The Jews did not understand him, simply because he would not condescend to use plain language. The Fourth Gospel Jesus is, in fact, nothing but a silly, wrangling, quibbling, half-demented sort of person, who tries to puzzle his hearers with his absurd metaphorical utterances, and who leaves them without explaining himself. He preaches no gospel; all he does is to talk the most absurd nonsense to the most learned and respected among the Jews, and then to revile them—"Ye are of your father, the Devil," etc. There is no such crack-brained Jesus in the Synoptical Gospels.

Again, the Fourth Gospel Jesus is represented as going about proclaiming himself "The Good Shepherd," "the shepherd of the sheep," "the door of the sheep," "the true vine," "the light of the world," "the way, the truth, and the life," "the bread of life," etc. He talks to the people of "walking in the light" and "walking in the darkness," of "walking in the night" and "abiding in darkness," of "believing on the light" and "becoming sons of light," of being "born again" and "born of the spirit." The Jesus of the Synoptics never in a single instance employs this kind of language.

The sayings of the Fourth Gospel Jesus, again, are full of expressions unknown to the vocabulary of his Synoptical namesake. The following are examples selected almost at random: "God is a spirit"; "I have overcome the world"; "The Father is in me, and I in the Father"; "If ye knew me, ye would know my Father also"; "That your joy may be fulfilled"; "He that hateth me hateth the Father also"; "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent

me"; "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is true"; "He that doeth the truth cometh to the light"; "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood.... abideth in me, and I in him"; "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink"; "In my Father's house are many mansions"; "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing"; "Ye are from beneath, I am from above"; "Ye are not of God"; "If a man love me, he will keep my word"; "Ye are of your father, the Devil," etc.

It is, of course, perfectly obvious that if Jesus spoke, taught, and acted in the way he is represented as doing in the Fourth Gospel, he could not have spoken, taught, and acted in the manner described in the Synoptics, and *vice versa*—the two have nothing in common. We have, then, to choose between them; for that one of the two lives of Jesus is a fabrication is beyond all question. Which, then, is the undoubtedly spurious Jesus? Every reader will, of course, see that it is he of the Fourth Gospel. But it will be necessary to advance good and incontrovertible evidence of the fact, and this I must postpone to the next paper.

ABRACADABRA.

SECULAR SERMON.

MORE ABOUT JESUS.

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."—JOHN XXI. 25.

THE Holy Ghost never inspired a more incredible piece of information than that vouchsafed in the barefaced exaggeration of our text. What an interminable talker, and untiring worker of myriads of miracles, must this obscure carpenter's son have been to require so much shodding of ink in chronicling his *faites et gestes*! Had the Holy Ghost kindly inspired some literary evangelical hack to write an unabridged history of the performances of the crucified Nazarene, what a god-send the ponderous tome would have been to the unhappy Eastern monarch who—so the fable hath it—insisted on hearing an unending tale, and so had to yawn year after year listening to the tedious rehearsal of the depredations of the locusts and their burglarious entry, one after another, into the granary. The Holy Ghost stands even now as the greatest storyteller in the world; but had he risen to the height of the great argument indicated in our text, he would have swallowed up all rivals in the tale-pitching art, both by the lengthiness of his holy yarns and by his bold defiance of truth and credibility.

Our Gospels, then, are evidently incomplete biographies, and contain but the *dissecta membra* of the real or fictitious carcase of Christian inventiveness concerning Christ. At grievous risk, therefore, of committing blasphemy against Christ, or, still worse, of sinning against the Holy Ghost, we propose to bring together a few facts or pious fictions which, in the fulness of time, may, we hope, be utilized by the inspired pen of the unborn fifth evangelist, who, under the distinguished patronage of the Holy Spirit, may undertake to write "the books that *should* be written" ament J. C. The facts—true as gospel—we shall relate will be seen to supplement, modify, or flatly contradict some of the received gospel facts, besides in other various, interesting, and important respects introducing a totally fresh element of fact or fancy into the life of Christ. We expect to be made either an archbishop or an archangel in reward for our pious labors on behalf of the biographical rehabilitation of Jesus Christ.

Christ's mother, according to Matthew and Luke, is the Virgin Mary; and his father the Holy Ghost, with perhaps a *souppon* of the angel Gabriel. The Jews in the Gospels always refer to Jesus as the Son of Joseph. The rest of the New Testament, and, on its authority, orthodox Christianity, ascribe to the *first*—not to the *third*—person of the Trinity the honor of paternal relationship to Jesus Christ. Feuerbach, however, says: "In Jewish mysticism God, according to one school, is a masculine, the Holy Ghost a feminine, principle, out of whose intermixture arose the Son, and with him the world.... The Herhutners also called the Holy Ghost the mother of the Savior" (*Essence of Christianity*, p. 70; note). This view is confirmed by Dr. Hooykaas, who says: "The story that the Holy Ghost was the father of Jesus must have arisen among the Greeks,

and not among the first believers, who were Jews, for the Hebrew word for *spirit* is of the feminine gender. The Ebionites, therefore, called the Holy Ghost the mother, and not the father, of Jesus" (*Bible for Young People*, vol. v., translated by Wicksteed, p. 71). Which of these four conflicting views is true? Did Jesus Christ have two mothers and two fathers? Christians, who believe in "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and give credit to the amorous episode of the Holy Ghost, already virtually accept a divine duality of dads for their Lord and Savior. Why are they not at once bountiful and consistent by indulging Jesus Christ with the luxury of two mothers?

Luke says that Christ was born in a stable at an inn; the Moslem tradition is that he was born beneath a palm tree; and Justin Martyr, whose authority is at least as respectable as that of the unknown writer of the Third Gospel, says (*Dialogue* 78) that he was born in a cave. But the chief point of all is, Was he ever born—here, there, or anywhere? If he ever existed, whence arises the silence of Philo and Josephus, and other authorities, concerning one who, on the orthodox hypothesis, was the most remarkable man, with the most remarkable birth, life, and death, that mortal ever had? Such reticence is inconsistent with the theory that Christ was conceived anywhere but in the brains of dreamy Josephs, hysterical women, and fanatical superstitionists.

For veracious information respecting the infantile frolics, precocious miracles, mud-pie marvels, and other diabolical antics of young Jesus, the pious reader is respectfully referred to the Gospels yclept Apocryphal, which, notwithstanding this stigma, contain as much verifiable matter of the miraculous type as the gospel four-in-hand. The faith which uplifts to heaven its pious proboscis at the rich banquet of absurdity provided by these despised and rejected Gospels, and yet feasts with delight its upturned optics upon the moral and intellectual menu of the received Gospels, or gourmandizes upon the equally unwholesome fare dished up in *The Lives of the Saints*, is more nice than wise, more dainty than discreet. The fact that Christians keep such indigestible matter upon their stomachs deserves to be regarded as the eighth wonder of the world. We are told (Jonah ii. 10): "The Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah"; but these omnivorous devourers of superstitious offal—the true believers—have such ostrich-like powers of digestion, and such capacious stomachs for the reception and assimilation of prophetic and evangelical, Biblical and ecclesiastical monsters and marvels, that the Word of the Lord would fail utterly to exercise upon their cast-iron stomachs the vomiting effect which is wrought so successfully upon the sickly whale.

How long did Jesus teach his new-fangled gospel? The Gospels say for three years. Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.*, bk. ii., ch. 22, sec. 6) puts the period at nearly twenty years. The Gospels imply that Jesus was thirty-three years of age when he was put to death. Irenæus tells us that Christ had passed forty years of age when he was crucified. The sceptical Christian may ask, "Who is Irenæus?" We would similarly reply, Who are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Irenæus we know; but who are these? The testimony of unknown men cannot outweigh the positive statement of a man like Irenæus, whose word is at least as reliable as that of the "four witnesses," who are supposed to be the "four beasts" who prowl about the book of Revelation.

Matthew Arnold says: "In that grand and immense repository founded by the Benedictines, the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, we read that in the theological faculty of the University of Paris, the leading mediæval university, it was seriously discussed whether Jesus at his ascension had his clothes on or not. If he had not, did he appear before his apostles naked? If he had, what became of the clothes?" (*Literature and Dogma*, p. 206). It is a pity the Holy Ghost left that sartorial secret unsolved. W. HEAFORD.

(To be concluded.)

Man is by birth so poor a creature that he is good only when he dreams. He needs illusions to make him do what he ought to do for the love of good. This slave has need of fear and of lies to perform his duty. You get the mass of men to make sacrifices only by giving them assurances that they will be paid back. The self-denial of the Christian is only a shrewd calculation, an investment for the sake of the kingdom of God.—*Renan*.

ACID DROPS.

ARCHBISHOP TEMPLE has been "throned" in Canterbury Cathedral. Jesus Christ was elevated on a cross. The disciple has certainly the better of the master.

Jesus Christ had very little cash. When the tax-gatherer called, Simon Peter had to go fishing for half-a-crown to pay the bill for both; and Judas Iscariot, the cashier of the first Salvation Army, sold up the whole business for less than a five-pound note. But times have changed since then. Christianity pays a lot better than it did in the beginning. The Archbishop of Canterbury's income is £15,000 a year—thrice that of the Prime Minister of the British Empire.

Archbishop Temple, as he walked through Canterbury Cathedral, was preceded by a gentleman carrying a golden cross. The Archbishop followed the golden cross then, and he will follow it to the end of his days.

What a skedaddle there would be from the Churches if the golden cross were turned into wood again!

The presence of the military at Archbishop Temple's throning was an object-lesson in the principles of Church and State. The Church is simply a public department, like the Army and Navy, and the Civil Service. Every clergyman is as much a public servant as a policeman. In fact, he is a policeman; a *spiritual* constable, acting on behalf of the law-and-order of old institutions and vested interests.

Mr. Greenwood, the gentleman who disturbed the Canterbury ceremony, cried out: "Dr. Frederick Temple, I object to this service; it is an entire fraud; it is one long-drawn lie." This gentleman was hustled out and taken to the Guildhall, where his mouth was gagged with a mutton chop. Three hundred years ago the chop would have been made upon his neck. It would have been, as near as possible, a chump chop.

Mr. Greenwood, however, was entirely right. The ceremony was "a long-drawn lie." According to theory, Dr. Temple is appointed by the Holy Ghost; according to fact, he is appointed by the Queen and Lord Salisbury. When a new bishop has to be appointed, the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral meet in holy conclave by order of the Crown, which provides them with a document containing the name of the clergyman who ought to be elected to the dignity. The Dean and Chapter then consult the Holy Ghost, and they invariably find that the Crown and the Holy Ghost have selected the same clergyman.

When the Archbishop was seated in the marble chair of St. Augustine, the *Te Deum* was sung, and the Archdeacon recited the Collect beginning: "Almighty God, giver of all good things." Dr. Temple must have appreciated that. God has given him a "good thing," worth £15,000 a year. But who is it, God or Devil, that gives poverty and starvation to thousands of honest men, and tender women, and dear little children, in this same Christian England?

After the ceremony there was a luncheon in the Cathedral Library. Three hundred clergymen, besides others, attacked the meat and drink. When they were duly "refreshed" there was speech-making, in the course of which Dr. Temple said that "his one aim should be to make it easier for Christians to become better Christians, and to make it easier for those who were not Christians to become Christians." The first part of this aim does not concern us; it is purely domestic. The second part of it is a different matter. Dr. Temple will not make it easy for non-Christians to become Christians while he lives in a palace and takes £15,000 a year for preaching "Blessed be ye poor." Non-Christians are simply filled with mingled laughter and disgust by all that tomfoolery in Canterbury Cathedral. It is only fit to impress children—and fools.

Considerable disappointment has been expressed in scientific quarters at the omission from the New Year's honors of the name of Mr. Herbert Spencer. Huxley, it will be remembered, was made a Privy Councillor.

The author of *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt* could provide for the notorious Brooks, but fails to recognize such an event as the completion of the synthetic philosophy of evolution.

The Negus Menelik, of Abyssinia, who, of course, is a good Christian, has celebrated his victory over the Italians at Adowah by a picture of the battle, in which a mounted figure of St. George is shown leading the Abyssinians on to victory. There is a great temple at Adowah dedicated to the militant saint, and this sacred edifice, it is alleged, was

used as cavalry stables by the Italians previous to the struggle in which they were so signally routed. Shortly after the battle a rumor gained wide currency among the Abyssinian legion that the figure of the outraged St. George, mounted on a white charger, had been seen upon the battlefield aiding in the defeat of the Emperor's enemies. The miracle will now have the confirmation of the painting.

It is curious that this legend should bear a resemblance to the story of the sign of the Cross appearing to Constantine. It was with this story that Frumentius first took Christianity to Abyssinia in 330. It has been Christian ever since, yet is inferior in civilization to the Moslem nations around it, being a sufficient proof that Christianity does not bring civilization.

According to Gibbon, St. George was a worthless scoundrel, who gained a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon. "He accumulated wealth by the basest arts of fraud and corruption; but his malversations were so notorious that George was compelled to escape from the pursuits of justice." This did not hinder his becoming a saint, and having legendary attributes which formerly pertained to the Egyptian god, Horus.

Abyssinia, by its isolation from the rest of the world, has preserved primitive Christianity pretty much as it was in the days of Constantine. It is there seen to be a system of pure superstition and pretended asceticism. There are over 12,000 monks in Abyssinia, not to mention nuns. A large part of the best land belongs to the monasteries, and the peasants are obliged to cultivate it in return for the spiritual benefit they derive from these holy people.

Baron Katte, a Prussian traveller, says: "I found everywhere in Abyssinia a confirmation of what I so frequently found in the East—namely, that the professors of Christianity are, in all moral respects, far below the Mahomedans. If anyone looks, then, for fidelity and probity, let him not knock at the door of a Christian, or he will find himself cruelly deceived."

The New York *Tribune* administers a rebuke to canting Christians which some at home might take to heart. It asks: "Are our Government and social order so impeccable as to make America the chartered censor of creation? We are angry with China when her mobs harry and kill our missionaries. But what of the Chinamen harried and killed here, not only with impunity, but with praise? We rage against the Turk for the horrors in Armenia. But what of our hundreds of victims of lynching, some of them burned at the stake, flayed alive, and sawn asunder?"

The Rev. Father Charles E. Burns, a Roman Catholic priest, of Milford, Conn., has been arrested on a charge of embezzling. Burns was appointed administrator of an estate. His successor finds the funds \$2,000 short. Hence his arrest.

Rev. William McCrea, a well-known minister of the Pittsburg Presbytery, and formerly a member of the Kansas Presbytery, is under arrest in Pittsburg, charged with attempting to pass a forged note for \$300 on the Lincoln National Bank. McCrea came to Pittsburg from Kansas six months ago, and since that time has acted as supply minister in the Presbyterian pulpits of the city.

A case of "witchcraft" was brought before the attention of the Belfast coroner last week. An infant ill with whooping-cough was taken to a "charmer" supposed, like Jesus, to be able to expel the demons. A four-legged donkey was brought into requisition, and three times in succession the infant was passed under the stomach of the animal, the "charmer" all the while going through some form of incantation. After this the donkey was given some special food, and at the same time the child was also given some food; and, while both were eating, the "charmer" again went over his mystic words. The child was then taken home, but evidently the work of the "charmer" was unsuccessful, for it got worse and died, and there was no magic powerful enough to effect a resurrection.

The superstitious Irish peasantry are declaring that the wailing of the Banshee was heard a week before Christmas in the valley of the moving bog in East Kerry. One writer in the *Daily News* (an Irishman, of course!) says this must not be set down to a freak of the Celtic imagination. He says that the late Archdeacon Whately, the only son of the famous Archbishop of Dublin, once heard distinctly, when administering the Holy Communion to a dying person, the wail known as the cry of the Banshee. Very likely! A man with any superstition in him may hear all sorts of noises on such an occasion. The fact is, the Banshee is only heard where people expect to hear it; in Ireland, for instance, pretty frequently, but never, or hardly ever, in England.

A great American pilgrimage has just started from New York for the Holy Land. What a pity Mark Twain is not employed as special correspondent. He would collect valuable material for an enlarged edition of *The New Pilgrim's Progress*; no one else could quite do justice to the final act of pilgrimage—the placing of the stars and stripes on the bogus site of the Holy Sepulchre.

Heard at Sanger's Circus, Dalston:—"Which are the two best books in the world?—The Bible and the North London Railway Guide. Why?—Because one teaches you the way to heaven, and the other tells what time the train starts."

The Rev. John Davies, "the Cadle Divine," objects to the orphan children of the Swansea Cottage Homes being allowed to go to a pantomime. The holy man says he has never been to a theatre, and is therefore competent to say that "they might as well be sent to hell at once."

According to the Vienna correspondent of the *Daily News*, a young lady of sixteen, the daughter of Baron Laminet, escaped from a convent at Pressburg, in Hungary. She was, however, handed back again to the tender mercies of the superior, who is making her a nun against her will. Can anything be more revolting than this sort of tyranny, which is only too common in Catholic countries? It would be impossible to treat young men in this way; they would fight their way to freedom. But a poor girl, with less physical strength and courage, is an almost helpless victim. The convent walls hold her as a prisoner for life. The outside world never hears her cries or sees her tears. She is doomed to suffer under she-devils, who justify their cruelty on grounds of religion. Surely this is an outrage on the first principles of liberty. Every convent should be subject to official inspection. Those who object to it have something to conceal.

The danger of barred windows to convents was exemplified at the fire which burnt down the Ursuline Convent at Roberval, on Lake St. John, Quebec, and burnt seven of the sisters to death. The nuns who escaped only did so with great difficulty. The cries of those left behind were heard through the barred windows, but no human aid was able to reach them.

It appears that the fire was caused by a lighted candle being placed too near the cradle of the infant Jesus in the Convent chapel. The draperies were ignited, and speedily the whole place was in a blaze. Jesus did nothing to save the seven brides of Christ who perished.

General Booth, in England, has had an interview at Hawarden with Mr. Gladstone. Of course the enterprising head of the Salvation Army sent a long report of the conversation to the newspapers. We learn from it, more or less accurately, that the income of the Salvation Army all over the world exceeds a million pounds a year, all of which is spent at William Booth's discretion. We also learn that William Booth has written the name of his successor on a piece of paper, and handed it to his solicitor. Nobody knows the name but himself, and he can alter it when he chooses. Whatever merit this plan may have, it is not original. The great Roman emperors appointed their successors, but they did it wisely and without secrecy. The Cæsar was trained to his duties, and was publicly associated with the Emperor in the government of the empire.

Booth boasted to Gladstone that he had 12,000 men and women separated from the ordinary avocations of life, and neither of the grand old financiers made any reflection on the cost of these non-producers being thrown on others.

A cyclone at Port Darwin, Australia, has destroyed churches as well as hotels and stores. Floods in Spain have also done great damage both to life and property. The city of Seville was almost entirely under water. The devil seems to be very active while the good god is asleep.

Truth has now appeared for twenty years, and Mr. Labouchere reviews its career for that period. Of the many actions for libel brought against him he has only lost six, and of these he assigns two to having credited the evidence of clergymen. He now says: "I have gradually learned that, of all witnesses on questions of fact, clergymen are the least trustworthy."

A writer in the *Progressive Thinker* calls those who are seeking to get God into the Constitution "theomaniaes," and tells them plainly that those who made that Constitution were men who feared neither God nor King George.

The Spiritists have soon sought capital out of Mr. Putnam's death. One at a *séance* directed a note to him, with the inquiry: "S. P. Putnam, do you still live?" The reply came: "Yes, I still live." It was, however, signed Samuel P. Putman, which, as the *Truthseeker* remarks, is "an error

of the sort which one is not likely to commit on his own signature." It adds: "We do not know who wrote the message. Mr. Putnam's death, in our judgment, precludes the possibility of his having written it."

The Greek Bishop Ambrosina appears not to have the approval of the Servian population of Uskub. They attempted to prevent his celebrating mass at Christmas, which the Greek Church celebrates twelve days after Western Christendom. In order to quiet the people, the Bishop was conducted out of the church by the military; but he was nevertheless stoned by the mob.

The vicar of St. Erth, Cornwall, proposed that a cemetery should be provided by the Parish Council under the Burials Act. They preferred, however, "Marten's Act," which gives the option of consecration; whereas under the Burials Act it is compulsory, and involves the payment of monumental and other fees to the vicar. At a parish meeting the vicar's proposal was defeated. He put the parish to the expense of a poll, with the result that the decision of the parish meeting was confirmed by ninety-three to thirty-eight.

Many of the Chinese and Japanese are very grateful to the British and Foreign Bible Society for so kindly supplying them with copies of the Holy Scriptures. They help to keep up a large industry, being used for making *papier maché* trays and tables, as well as to wrap drugs in and other purposes.

Archdeacon Grant, in his *Bampton Lectures*, says: "The cause of the eagerness evinced to obtain the sacred volume cannot be traced to a thirst for the word of life, but to the secular purposes, the unhallowed uses, to which the holy word of God, left in their hands, has been turned, and which are absolutely shocking to any Christian's feeling."

The author of *Records of Travel in Turkey* says that the Jews take the Bible with great pleasure, because saving them expense. They carefully destroy the New Testament, and place the old original revelation in their synagogues, sneering at the donors. He also mentions that the Albanians make wadding for their guns of the leaves of the Bible, if they have no other.

The educational program of the Government is to be State-aid instead of rate-aid for Voluntary schools. No doubt this is a wise party move, and the best that can be ventured on in favor of clericalism; for rate-aid would lead to popular control. An additional Church endowment, however, is almost as objectionable as a church-rate, and Mr. Balfour may find himself in almost as troublous waters as last year.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* has a cartoon illustrating Mr. Balfour drowning a kitten labelled "rate-aid," while "State-aid" is purring at his feet. The picture is effective, but would have been more appropriate if the animals had been young tigers.

Mr. E. D. Baring Gould has been telling an anecdote about his father's hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," which is the favorite of the Duke of Cambridge, and a translation of which got the Armenians into such trouble with the Turks. The first verse ends with the lines, "With the cross of Jesus going on before." Bishop Ellicott would not allow these words to be sung as a processional hymn, so Mr. Sabine Baring Gould changed the words, "going on before," to "left behind the door."

President Cleveland, having dragged Jesus Christ into his Thanksgiving Proclamation, to the disgust of all non-Christian citizens of the United States, is now coquetting with the Salvation Army. "Commander" Booth-Tucker, who went over from England to supersede "Bally" Booth, was received at the White House on Friday, January 9. President Cleveland discussed with him the methods, plans, and purposes of the "Army," and is reported to be "greatly interested in its work." Can it be possible that the present occupant of the White House, who will soon have to vacate it in favor of McKinley, is going to enter upon a fresh career in the service of "General" Booth? Who knows? The surprising often happens; and has not Cleveland of late shown many signs of growing piety?

Maurice Vernes holds that the oldest parts of the Bible, "the proto-Hexateuch"—that is, the earliest parts from Genesis to Joshua—were composed after the exile, or between 450 and 300 B.C.; the historical books between 350 and 250 B.C.; the prophetic books, Amos to Malachi, between 300 and 200; and the traditional Hexateuch compiled and completed about 300; Daniel, 180; while Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah may be dated 150. Linguistic arguments are, however, adduced by Dr. E. König for placing the early writings earlier.

That subtle Jesuit, Professor St. G. Mivart, uses "The Burial Service," in the *Nineteenth Century*, as an instance of the breach of continuity between the Anglican and the Roman Churches. His argument will be difficult to answer.

The Polish Catholic Church of St. Stanislaus, New York, has been closed because the conduct of the directors, according to a published complaint, was "so violent, so turbulent, so un-Christian, so dangerous to the peace, and so opposed to the wishes of a large body of the members of the Verein (all of whom are members of the church), that the ecclesiastical authorities of the Archdiocese of New York have been compelled, in the interests of good order and for the purpose of preventing scandal to religion, to close the edifice and exclude the congregation therefrom."

Moody, seeking his million dollars to reform New York, says Christianity has become a mere lifeless form. There is no room for Christ on earth to-day. It is one thing for Christians to have praise services and praise God that Christ came 1,900 years ago; but how about his coming back again?

The Rev. A. H. Sayce, in his article on "Recent Discoveries in Babylonia" in the January number of the *Contemporary Review*, admits that "the kings of Lagas and their monuments must go back to about 4000 B.C." He makes no mention of the fact that the records of Nippur, in the opinion of Professor Hilprecht, extend back some thousands of years further. But this is an admission that a civilization had developed at a date which, according to the Bible, was that of the creation of Adam and Eve.

In the *Expositor* Professor W. M. Ramsay complains that Professor Schürer "allowed himself to go to the verge of calling me a humbug." We might not have paused at the verge had we been in Professor Schürer's shoes.

India offers a fine field for the Salvation Army fanatic, for the lower castes are accustomed to estimate religion by the physical fervor displayed by its advocates. Major Deva Sundrum has been relating how he makes converts by "boom marches." He sends scouts, sappers, and miners to the villages, and induces the heads to permit a religious revival. Then, says the "Major," "with drums beating, horns blowing, and colors flying, they attack village after village, summoning all to surrender in the name of King Jesus. Sometimes a whole village comes over, and, kneeling down, prays for pardon and forgiveness, and, at the same time, gives up demon-worship and idolatry."

Major Deva Sundrum boasts of more than this, for he says he has broken into forty temples driving out the Devil—by which he means the Brahminical priests. Major Sundrum is worth noting by the authorities. He may bring them into trouble with the natives, who, if once stirred to a rival fanaticism, may do mischief.

Who says the good old-fashioned faith is dead? Let them read the *Christian Herald*, or the following extract from a tract extensively circulated in the North of England: "Will you, can you, dare you, one moment longer remain unsaved? 'Now' is God's time; to-morrow may be too late. The dark thunder-cloud of God's wrath is about to burst on your head, and if you remain in your present position the voice from heaven may sound forth, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.' Delay not another moment; don't be perplexed about the future. He who saves poor sinners has promised to 'keep' them; and the moment you receive Christ into your heart by faith He will grant you power to overcome sin, self, and Satan, and give you strength to live for Him."

The Mighty Atom's *Sorrows of Satan* has been produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, with Mr. Lewis Waller as His Majesty the Devil, incarnate in Prince Lucio Rimanez. Satan on the boards may yet become a precedent for introducing Jahveh in a burlesque, as Jove has already been.

The Proceedings of the Spookical Research Society read a good deal like grave records of lunacy. The number of persons who regard their own insanity as evidence of inspiration is quite considerable.

The Hastings magistrates will not patronize the fashionable "science" of palmistry, and have fined Ella Gordon Ford £10 for fortune-telling by reading the hand. The only safe form of fortune-telling is sky-pilotage to kingdom-come.

Sabbatarianism is still pretty strong in New York. A decrepit old woman, Mary Barrett, was fined three dollars for selling two bananas on Sunday, December 13. As the sale of two bananas did not allow such a large margin of profit, she had to go to jail for a week. Her prosecutor, a woman named Rebecca Fream, is animated by religious zeal; but a woman who would get a poor old decrepit

member of her own sex imprisoned for selling two bananas is—well, a Christian.

The Canadian Christian women, who want to rule the Dominion as they do their own houses, have induced the Government to stop the circulation of the *Paris Figaro*. These meddlesome women promise to bring about "other reforms," probably of a similar nature. We hope to hear that they have begun an agitation against the Bible, a book which is put into the hands of children, although it contains dirty texts which the *Paris Figaro* would never think of printing.

The governor of a certain city, a long time ago, explained why they did not fire a salute when visited by the king. He gave a number of reasons, the last being that they had no powder. Similarly, a New York minister recently gave a number of reasons why the Churches should put down Sunday newspapers, the last being this: "We have the right because we have the power." Such delicious logic ought not to be spoiled by criticism, so we leave it as it is.

The power (and impudence) of the Irish priest is well exemplified in Cardinal Logue's letter to the *Freeman's Journal*. "I observe with regret," he wrote, "that the Archdiocese of Armagh is being favored by much more than its due share of political meetings." Two such meetings had been held recently, and two more were in contemplation. This was too much for the Cardinal, who intimated his desire that his part of Ireland should be kept quiet. Accordingly, the "two more" meetings never took place. Mr. Dillon cannot oppose the wishes of an Irish priest. It was different in the days of Parnell.

Mr. Parson, a Methodist missionary at Jabalpur, India says that "at least 90,000, as shown by Government statistics, will have died of famine in this division, which is only a very small proportion of the area similarly affected between January 1 and December 31, 1896; and the famine is growing in intensity day by day."

A Bombay telegram says that Surgeon-Major Robert Manser, principal physician of the Jamsetjee Hospital, who has been actively engaged in investigating the plague, has fallen a victim to his devotion to the cause of science, having just succumbed to the malady. Such is the watchful care of Providence.

The memorial window to the Armenian martyrs, put in Hawarden Church, supplies another illustration of Providence. The special prayer, after asking God to succor captives, said: "O Almighty God, Who art glorified in the Noble Army of Martyrs, we yield unto Thee most high praise and hearty thanks for our Armenian brethren who have suffered for righteousness' sake." So the Almighty Grand Turk is thanked for the outrages he witnessed and permitted.

The new Archbishop of Canterbury is quite unable to trust in Providence. Finding that the drainage of Lambeth Palace is in a very unsatisfactory state, he has taken a furnished house in Lennox-gardens. It is expected that by Easter the Palace will be fit for habitation by this £15,000 a year clergyman, who is naturally anxious not to quit this miserable vale of tears prematurely.

A New York candidate for the bar was asked by the examiners: "Can a wife, after discovering the infidelity of her husband, but subsequently cohabiting, then bring action for divorce?" The examiners were rather staggered by the answer: "Certainly; for his disbelief in a deity would be immaterial." Another candidate's definition of law is worth preserving: "Law is injustice reduced to an exact science."

Visions.

Want of originality seems one of the most remarkable features in the visions of mystics. The stiff Madonnas, with their crowns and petticoats, still transfer themselves from the pictures on cottage walls to appear in spiritual personality to peasant visionaries, as the saints who stood in vision before ecstatic monks of old were to be known by their conventional, pictorial attributes. When the Devil with horns, hoofs, and tail had once become a fixed image in the popular mind, of course men saw him in this conventional shape. So real had St. Anthony's satyr-demon become to men's opinions that there is a grave thirteenth-century account of the mummy of such a devil being exhibited at Alexandria, and it is not fifteen years back from the present time that there was a story current at Teignmouth of a devil walking up the walls of the houses, and leaving his fiendish backward footprints in the snow.—*Dr. E. B. Tylor "Primitive Culture," p. 307.*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 17, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "The Sorrows of Satan."
January 24, Glasgow; 31, Liverpool.
February 7, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS. — January 17, Manchester; 24, Athenæum, London; 31, Athenæum, London. February 7, Athenæum, London; 14, Leicester; 21, Liverpool; 23, Paisley; 24, Greenock; 25, Motherwell; 26, Dunoon; 28, Glasgow. — All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

W. T. PRAY (Truro). — Rabbi Wise's *Origin of Christianity* was published at Cincinnati. Mr. Forder can let you have a copy. *Mankind: their Origin and Destiny*, is out of print.

G. L. MACKENZIE. — Glad to receive your congratulations on our "visit to, and safe return from, the land of Ingersoll, Edison, and Niagara." Receive, in return, our thanks for the bright and clever—and often more than clever—verses with which you regale our readers.

A. J. HOOPER. — Thanks. See paragraph.

CAPTAIN OTTO THOMSON. — We reciprocate your good wishes, and trust the cause will make progress in Sweden.

TWO GERMAN FREETHINKERS. — Your telegram was duly received on Monday evening. Thanks for your hearty good wishes.

R. FIELDING. — Ruskin's works are still too dear for working men's purses. Pirated editions are published very cheap in America, and, of course, there must be a considerable demand for them. Here in England, too, we believe that a really cheap issue of Ruskin's works would "catch on." There is noble and splendid writing in *Fors Clavigera*, but although this series of Letters was addressed to "the workmen and laborers of Great Britain," it was published at a price far beyond their means. Even the new edition, in four crown octavo volumes, is only accessible to the middle classes. Working men cannot buy books at the rate of six shillings a volume.

G. CRUDDAS. — We hope Mr. Cohen's fresh course of lectures at Stanley will be a great success.

C. COHEN. — Sorry you had to be in the country on the night of the Annual Dinner. You would have been pleased to see the large gathering. Enclosure handed to Mr. Hartmann.

G. R. (Liverpool). — Thanks for card and good wishes.

S. F. A. — Will try to use it.

ATHEIST points out that the anagram of "Congregationalism," referred to in our last issue, is quite inaccurate, as indeed it is.

W. H. BAKER, Camberwell Branch, reports a very successful lecture last Sunday evening by Mr. Ward, and thinks that Branches would do well to engage this promising young lecturer.

REGULATOR. — The *Family Herald* nonsense shall be dealt with in our next.

C. E. SMITH. — Will be useful. Thanks.

T. DUNBAR. — Received.

J. F. HAMPSON. — Glad to hear that Bolton friends were pleased with the hearty reception Messrs. Foote and Watts met with in America. We will consider the extract by next week.

W. G. ALLAN. — The text you refer to simply says that a bastard shall not enter the congregation of the Lord—that is, an illegitimate person (one born out of wedlock) was not to attend divine service with other Jews.

PAPERS RECEIVED. — Cambria Daily Leader—Portsmouth Times—New York Public Opinion—Freidenker—Post—People's Newspaper—Torch of Reason—Truthseeker—Reynolds's Newspaper—Methodist Times—Temperance World—Vegetarian Messenger—Freedom—Sunday Chronicle—Open Court—Boston Investigator—Monist—Sydney Bulletin—Blue Grass Blade—Isle of Man Times—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Firebrand—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Der Arme Teufel.

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

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 Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

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

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

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

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

IN spite of the disagreeable weather, there was a large audience at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Throning of Archbishop Temple." Mr. Foote occupies the same platform again this evening (January 17). Mr. Watts then comes to the Athenæum Hall for three Sundays, while Mr. Foote is lecturing in the provinces.

The subject of Mr. Foote's lecture at the Athenæum Hall this evening (January 17) will be "The Sorrows of Satan," *appropos* of Marie Corelli's novel and the dramatisation of it for a London theatre. Freethinkers should try to bring their Christian friends to hear this lecture.

Mr. Charles Watts had an enthusiastic reception last Sunday in Sheffield, where he lectured three times. Unfortunately the weather was terrible, which interfered with the morning and afternoon audiences. The evening meeting, however, was an excellent one, and we are informed that Mr. Watts's new lecture, "Sin and Secular Salvation," caught on, many friends saying it was one of the best they had ever heard him deliver. Despite a dense fog and a heavy fall of snow, followed by a rapid thaw, several men were brave enough to attend from the outlying districts. The audience in the morning greeted with repeated cheers the announcement that Colonel Ingersoll had promised to visit England for a brief lecturing tour.

To-day, Sunday, January 17, Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. In the morning Mr. Watts will speak upon "Colonel Ingersoll and Freethought in America"; in the afternoon upon "Moses and the Jewish Religion"; and in the evening upon "Sin and Secular Salvation."

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, was held on Monday evening in the Venetian Chamber of the Holborn Restaurant, Mr. G. W. Foote presiding. In point of numbers this gathering beat the record, and a large proportion of ladies lent grace and color to the scene. It is also gratifying to state that the record was also beaten in the result of the chairman's solicitation for funds for the N.S.S. The first subscription card handed up was for £10. This amount was afterwards increased in a friendly competition, and another gentleman filled in a card for £20. There was much good-humored applause when the chairman remarked: "We are getting on remarkably well for a dying party." Mr. Hartmann, the N.S.S. treasurer, took possession of the cash and promises, and his official statement will appear in next week's *Freethinker*.

Brief speeches were made by the chairman, and by Messrs. Watts, Forder, Moss, Heaford, and Snell. Mrs. Watts gave a most effective humorous recitation. Madame Saunders presided at the piano, and capital songs were sung by Miss Williams and Mr. Brown. During the evening a flash-light photograph of the company was taken by a representative of Messrs. Fradelle and Young, of Regent-street. A framed copy of this photograph is on view at 28 Stonecutter-street. All present had an opportunity of inspecting the fine portrait of Colonel Ingersoll, which Mr. Foote brought over from America as a gift from the great Freethought orator, and also the beautiful lace handkerchief that was worked by Mrs. Macdonald (mother of the two *Truthseeker* Macdonalds), and presented to Mr. Foote by the ladies at the Chicago Congress.

Some friends who had purchased dinner tickets were kept away by bad colds, the result of the miserable weather, which almost makes the prospect of Hades a positive relief. Mr. George Anderson, who was to have attended our annual dinner for the first time, and for whom a chair was reserved, was unfortunately prevented from coming by indisposition. Mr. Forder looked far from well, we regret to say; on the other hand, Miss Vance has almost entirely recovered from her attack of influenza. Of course she was very busy on Monday evening. Mr. Wheeler looked quite himself again, and Mr. Watts was apparently none the worse for a big dose of Sheffield fog. Mr. Foote, who was universally wished many happy returns of the day, was in good health and spirits.

January 11 may become a very notable date. On that day the General Arbitration Treaty between Great Britain and the United States was signed on behalf of both countries at Washington. Unless the Senate refuses to endorse the treaty, which is highly improbable, it will mark the opening of a new era of international peace and concord.

The Camberwell Branch will have a Cinderella dance next Tuesday (January 19). It is expected to be a very enjoyable function, and Freethinkers are invited from all parts of the

metropolis. The tickets are one shilling each. This evening (January 17) there is to be a *conversazione*, with singing and instrumental music. Tickets sixpence.

The first indoor Sunday lectures at Derby were delivered on January 10 by Mr. C. Cohen. In spite of the wretched weather, he had good audiences, the evening meeting including many ladies. Unfortunately there was no discussion; but a large quantity of literature was disposed of. Freethought is evidently gaining ground in Derby.

Under the auspices of the Humanitarian League, the Rev. W. Douglas Morrison, the chaplain of Wandsworth Prison, will lecture at St. Martin's Town Hall, Trafalgar-square, on "The Treatment of Criminals," on Tuesday, January 19, at 8 p.m. We met Mr. Morrison at the last Conference called by the League, and are assured that his remarks on this subject are worth attention. Admission is free.

We are delighted to hear that Colonel Ingersoll's health has so improved that he is looking forward to entering the lecture field again at an early date. We trust, however, that he will husband his strength in future, and not risk another breakdown. A man of sixty-three cannot do what he did at forty-three. He does not command the same physical resources. Age affects the bodily powers long before it affects the brain.

The New York *Truthseeker* for December 26 contains an account of the funeral of the late S. P. Putnam, which is reproduced in our columns. It also contains a six-column report of the farewell banquet to Messrs. Foote and Watts, with a close summary of all the speeches. The *Truthseeker* is still giving large selections from Mr. Foote's Letters from America.

Mr. Foote has promised to lecture before the Pioneer Club on February 11. His subject will be "The Ethics of Imprisonment." Honnor Morten is to take the chair, and the discussion is to be opened by Captain McNeile. The Pioneer is a ladies' club, under the presidency of Mrs. E. L. Massingberd; and as the entrance fee is three guineas, and the annual subscription three guineas more, it may be regarded as "select."

Mr. C. Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, Kentucky, mentions that he has received the poster of a negro who calls himself "The Black Ingersoll," and who is lecturing in Alabama. The orator says: "I am an infidel, and open to conversion." He offers "special seats for the clergy and white friends."

Sainte Barbe, one of the most famous high schools of Paris, founded in 1460, and the *alma mater* of Calvin and of Loyola, has been bought by the Government for 2,000,000 francs. It is becoming constantly more difficult for private institutions to compete with the State establishments. Last year the *École Monge*, from which religious instruction was excluded, was turned over to the city of Paris, and was rechristened Lycee Carnot. This year it is the turn of the Catholic College of Sainte Barbe.

Reynolds's Newspaper (January 10) says: "The *Secular Almanack*, edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, published by Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., price 3d., has been issued for over a quarter of a century. Those who have open minds, and who do not dread the unadorned truth, will be eager to procure a copy of the almanack for 1897."

We have received only three letters up to date on the question whether the National Secular Society should or should not have a President. These will appear in our next issue. We offered to find room for this discussion, but we do not feel inclined to force an interest in it.

"When a preacher goes beyond his knowledge in preaching," says the *Texas Baptist Standard*, "he is inviting confusion and shame." Well said. Now stick to it, and you will rid the country of much intolerable bosh about God and Christ and the Holy Ghost and the Devil and heaven and hell and regeneration, the witness of the spirit and sanctification. When you require a preacher to talk only of what he knows, you shut his mouth to all that is distinctively religious. This we know by experience. We were once a preacher, and, observing the confusion and shame of theological differences, we at length formed the resolution not to go beyond what we knew to be true, or for which we had the warrant of reason. That resolution brought us out of the ministry and into Liberalism—a step that we do not regret, and one that we recommend to other ministers.—*J. D. Shaw.*

GODS, AND GOD-FANCIERS.

(Tune: "Sally in our Alley.")

Of all the gods that live to-day,
We dearly love but one God;
And that's the God whom all obey:
Earth's Hub, our Life, our Sun-God.

Of all the gods that e'er did die,
The world contemns but one God;
And that's the God whom all deny:
The Christian's Hot-cross-bun God.

Of all the gods that "liked a glass,"
The pious praise but one God;
And that's the bairn of Joseph's lass—
Her brewing, bibbing Son-God.

The godly play at "Hide-and-peek";
They "hide" their God on Monday,
And keep him hidden all the week;
The "seeking's" played on Sunday.

The Christians worship God with zeal;
They worship him sincerely
With turkey, pudding, lemon-peel,
And "special" whisky—yearly.

Of all the gods that e'er did write,
The righteous read but one God:
The God whose book makes Christians fight—
The write-for-spite-or-fun God.

Of all the godlings droll and rare,
The Trinity's the oddest;
There's none, with them, that can compare;
They're each, God, Godder, Goddest.

Of all the gods that "rule the roast,"
I loathe and scorn but one God;
And that's the Father-Son-and-Ghost—
The one-two-three-in-one God.

Of all the gods whom men describe—
And, sure, the list's not small of them—
I smile, and laugh, and flout, and gibe,
And scoff at only—all of them.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

DE QUINCEY'S "FEMALE INFIDEL."

THERE has always seemed to me something peculiarly fascinating about De Quincey's story of *The Female Infidel*. Also it seems to me that there are some observations to be made on it which are not likely to be included in the notes of Dr. Masson, who is now engaged on a new edition of the English opium eater's works. In the first place, De Quincey appears not to have recognized the atrocious injustice involved in refusing the lady's evidence on the ground of her religious disbelief. Or, if he perceived it, it was inexcusable to refrain from denouncing it. And in the second place, while De Quincey's recital of earlier incidents of the narrative possesses many beauties of a literary kind, its tone is so excessively naive and ingenuous that the reader is left in doubt whether some subtle irony, at the expense of professors of religion, is not carefully concealed beneath. Though of this I do not complain.

There is no doubt, however, of De Quincey's admiration of the lady, so far as regards her personal charms, her accomplishments, and her controversial powers. He has left us, in this chapter of his *Autobiography*, the portrait of an extremely fascinating woman, and, at the same time, a picture of the attitude of English society towards "infidelity" a century ago. His romantic little story of real life is far more interesting than many fashionable novels, and its *denouement* is a disgrace to the law which then imposed so grievous a disability on honest unbelief.

De Quincey could not have been more than eight years old when Antonina Dashwood Lee was a visitor at his maternal home; but as he saw the lady later in life, and was assisted by the recollections of others, it is probable that his description of her is not less accurate than vivid. She was then twenty-two years old, having been born in

1774, and was the daughter of Lord le Despencer, known previously as Sir Francis Dashwood. At a very early age she married a young Oxonian known as "Handsome Lee," but from him she speedily separated by an agreement, dividing between them her fortune of forty-five thousand pounds. Her face and figure are described by De Quincey as "classically beautiful," and she had the reputation of accomplishments, "not only eminent in their degree, but rare and interesting in their kind. In particular, she astonished every person by her impromptu performances on the organ, and by her powers of disputation. These last she applied entirely to attacks upon Christianity, for she openly professed infidelity in the most audacious form; and at my mother's table she certainly proved more than a match for all the clergymen of the neighboring towns, some of whom (as the most intellectual persons of that neighborhood) were daily invited to meet her."

She had an "astounding command of theological learning," and completely vanquished two clerical champions, Mr. H.—— and Mr. Clowes, the latter being rector of St. John's Church, Manchester. "Mr. H. was dreadfully commonplace, dull, dreadfully dull, and, by the necessity of his nature, incapable of being in deadly interest, which his splendid antagonist at all times was. His encounter, therefore, with Mrs. Lee presented the distressing spectacle of an old, toothless, mumbling mastiff, fighting for the household to which he owed allegiance against a young leopardess fresh from the forests. Every touch from *her*, every velvety paw, drew blood. And something comic mingled with what my mother felt to be paramount tragedy." As for Mr. Clowes, "horror, blank horror, seized him upon seeing a woman, a young woman, a woman of captivating beauty whom God had adorned so eminently with gifts of person and of mind, breathing sentiments that to him seemed fresh from the mintage of hell. He could have apostrophized her (as long afterwards he himself told me) in the words of Shakespeare's Juliet: 'Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!' for he was one of those who never think of Christianity as the subject of defence."

It will probably occur to the reader that the race of Mr. H.'s and Mr. Clowes's is by no means extinct. Most of us have met these pious "mumblers" who become inarticulate with "horror, blank horror," when they hear their moribund dogmas assailed.

"To Mr. Clowes it was in effect the lofty Lady Geraldine from Coleridge's 'Christabelle' that stood before him in this infidel lady. A magnificent witch she was, like the lady Geraldine; having the same superb beauty, the same power of throwing spells over the ordinary gazer, and yet at intervals unmasking to some solitary, unfascinated spectator the same dull blink of a snaky eye, and revealing, through the most fugitive of gleams, a traitress couchant beneath what else to all others seemed the form of a lady, armed with incomparable pretensions—one that was

"Beautiful exceedingly,
Like a lady from a far country."

De Quincey describes the shock which these scenes gave to his mother, "who shuddered at the unfeminine intrepidity with which the 'leopardess' conducted her assaults upon the sheep-folds of orthodoxy." Very quaintly, too, he describes his mother's solicitude for her servants who waited at dinner, and were inevitably liable to impressions from what they heard. She saw "danger from the simple *fact*, now suddenly made known to them, that it was possible for a person unusually gifted to deny Christianity." She was also alarmed at Mrs. Lee's footman, who was "a showy and most audacious Londoner, and what is technically known in the language of servants' hiring offices, a 'man of figure.' He might, therefore," De Quincey slyly adds, "be considered as one dangerously armed for shaking religious principles, especially among the female servants."

It would be superfluous, however, to reproduce much more of this interesting narrative—familiar enough to all students of De Quincey, and easily accessible to others. One would, however, wish to make a remark on De Quincey's description of Mrs. Lee's "peculiar temper as connected with her infidel thinking." He says: "No passive or latent spirit of freethinking was hers—headlong it was, uncompromising, almost fierce, and regarding no restraints of place or season. Like Shelley, some few years later, whose day she would have gloried to welcome, she looked upon her principles not only as conferring rights, but also as imposing duties of active proselytism."

Exactly; in this last sentence De Quincey indicates clearly enough the binding obligation which this lady Freethinker recognized as resting upon herself, and which, in no less a degree, is imposed upon all Freethinkers in all times who worthily bear the name. We must not hoard up the truth as we know it. Having freely received, we must freely give. It is a transparent trick of priestcraft—and a piece of impudence as well—to suggest to Freethinkers that they should keep their views to themselves. There are, of course, "restraints of place and season." But these must be imposed by good taste and good sense—not by priestly suggestion. If we permitted clerics to prescribe, we should be wrong in opening our mouths in any place or at any season. Absolute and eternal silence alone would satisfy *them*. As for the somewhat maudlin Tennysonian counsel, "Leave thou thy sister when she prays," etc., that is—as Thomas Hardy makes one of the characters in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* say of it—"less honest than musical."

In this proselytizing feature of Mrs. Lee's character De Quincey's mother "foresaw an instant evil—viz., the inevitable alienation of all her female friends. In many parts of the Continent my mother was aware that the most flagrant proclamation of infidelity would not stand in the way of a woman's favorable reception into society. But in England, at that time, this was far otherwise."

Hastening on, however, to the final incident, we learn that, at the Oxford Lent Assizes in 1804, Mrs. Lee appeared in the witness-box to prosecute two brothers—the Rev. Lockhart Gordon and Mr. Loudon Gordon—whom she charged with forcibly abducting her from her house in Bolton-row, Piccadilly. A single question brought the whole investigation to a close. She was suddenly asked by the counsel for the defence whether she believed in the Christian religion? "Her answer," says De Quincey, "was brief and peremptory, without distinction or circumlocution—'No.' 'Or perhaps, not in God?' Again she replied 'No'; and again her answer was prompt and *sans phrase*. Upon this the judge declared that he could not permit the trial to proceed." The jury instantly acquitted the prisoners. But it is satisfactory to know that the clerical brother received a severe lecture from the judge, and the younger was detained on an action for debt. Mrs. Lee afterwards went into retirement, publishing some years subsequently a book on a subject connected with political or social philosophy. Wordsworth spoke of it repeatedly as distinguished by vigor and originality of thought.

F. N.

Strongly Stated.

In his *Luniatry: Ancient and Modern*, Gerald Massey expresses himself very forcibly when he says: "It is just as easy to prove that a historic Christ never existed as it is to demonstrate that the mermaid or the moon-calf, the sphinx or the centaur, never lived."

Mr. Massey illustrates by saying: "Pliny, in his *Natural History*, describes the moon-calf as a monster, engendered by a woman only [without the aid of the male].....This moon-calf had the same origin and birth in the phenomena as any other child of the Virgin Mother. The mythical Christ is equally the monster, or chimera, that is engendered of the woman only. The Christian fathers accounted for the virgin motherhood of the historical Jesus by asserting that certain females, like the vulture, could conceive without the male."

What I Would Like to Know.

How Christians love their Savior,
Yet with fear and trembling pray,
And on Sunday change behavior
From their usual week-day fray?
Why they look so awful solemn
While listening to glad news,
And build churches, as they call 'em,
When they cannot fill the pews?
Why love Him above all others,
Against all nature's laws?
Is his love above a mother's,
Or is his a greater cause?
Why Christians hate the Jewish race,
And make just one exception,
"The King of Jews," the Lord of Grace,
The Immaculate Conception?

DICK.

FUNERAL OF S. P. PUTNAM.

THE services at the funeral of Samuel P. Putnam, held in Boston on Tuesday, December 15, were of the simplest character. "No pomp or ceremony, no bell, or book, or candle," as the Boston papers were surprised to observe. It was by his friends and among his friends, and the curious public was rigidly excluded, else they would have made an exhibition of it; such is the morbid streak running through the average thoughtless human being. There was no intention on the part of the Liberals to pander to this feeling.

But the little chapel where the services were held was crowded with his friends—Boston's staunchest Freethinkers, who had come to pay the last honors to the dead. The body lay in a massive casket, draped with black. The features were composed, and he appeared to be asleep, the friends said, when they took the farewell view. The hall was darkened, and in the corners shadows fell; but one beam of light was cast upon the cofined face. After a solemn hush a quartette, composed of Mr. Hull, Mrs. Johnson, his daughter, her daughter, and Miss Minchen, sang a hymn appropriate to the belief of the dead, and then Mr. Washburn read the short tribute which follows. The whole service was most impressive, though simple, and was in accord, we know, with Mr. Putnam's own sentiments. He wanted no ostentatious display, but desired to be remembered by his friends and the world for the work he attempted.

Mr. Washburn's address was prefaced with the poem, "When I am Gone," written by Susan H. Wixon:—

When I am gone! It seems so strange
That I shall go
Beyond scones of my vision's range,
And no more know.

I, who, seeming so much a part
Of all in life,
Will cease to feel this beating heart
In joy or strife.

Others will take the work I leave
And bear it on;
In various ways the threads will weave
When I am gone.

Seasons the same will come and go,
With storms and sun;
And rivers, with increasing flow,
Onward will run.

The busy world, with all its care,
Will still speed on;
And flowers will bloom as gay and fair
When I am gone.

But perfect peace and sweetest sleep
I shall have won;
Naught shall disturb my slumber deep
When I am gone.

No fitful change, no voices rude,
No night or dawn,
Upon my rest will e'er intrude
When I am gone.

THE ADDRESS.

MY FRIENDS: We have met together here to pay the last tribute of respect and affection to a friend and brother; to perform the last rites for the dead, and to take leave with sad thoughts and tender recollections of what is mortal of Samuel P. Putnam.

It is hard to speak of our friend as dead. It is hard to realize that the bright star has set. There was about him so much life, so much health, so much vigor. His whole being was the foe of every friend of death. He had passed the meridian, but life was a song, and not a dirge in his heart. The years had been kind to him—they did not bring him the storms of age, but the sunshine of youth. His buoyant nature was not overcome by living, but strengthened and intensified. Experiences that to weaker minds would have brought discouragement, to his acted as incentives to greater effort. His capacity for work was marvellous, and seemed to increase with every added burden. He possessed the happy gift of hope. Through the darkest clouds he could discern its shining light. In his presence doubt disappeared and confidence was born. His enthusiasm was a part of the man. It was not a bonfire, kindled for some special occasion, but a flame lighted by conviction and fed by reflection. And so he made, wherever he went, an atmosphere of cheerfulness, of warmth and glow, of sunshine and flowers, of song and cheer.

Born in New England, Mr. Putnam inherited the varied enchantments of her hills and valleys. His mind had mountain heights and running streams. He could unbind Prometheus—release mankind from suffering and misery—and take from Flora's hands her beautiful gifts for man. He had love of liberty and love of beauty. He was reformer and poet. While he hated with undisguised hatred every enemy of liberty, he loved with generous feeling the friends of man.

Mr. Putnam received from his father the literary instinct. He was a bright pupil in the schools. He entered Dartmouth College in 1858, but, before the time came for him to graduate, the nation called for soldiers to defend her flag, and the name of Samuel P. Putnam was enrolled as a private in the army. For four years he served his country, until the stars on our national banner shone peacefully in their blue sky, and the stains on its crimson ground were fading away. He entered the military service carrying a rifle, but he won a sword, and for two years he was Captain Putnam.

His father was a Congregational clergyman, and he was trained to preach as his father preached; but his nature was not in harmony with orthodox theology. His thoughts could not be imprisoned by dogma and creed, and his heart would have starved on the husk and straw of Calvinism.

For a few years he found congenial associations among the Unitarians; but no religious denomination gives man his natural liberty. What one has found has been used to bind others, and sect and party merely indicate where progress was arrested, and where man was forbidden to think. No religion has allowed freedom, and no priest has encouraged investigation. The soul that would search for the truth must leave the church. Mr. Putnam learned that the experience of others must be his own, and if he would be free he must cut the chains that bound him. To be a free man he must be a free thinker, and so he threw off all allegiance to tradition, and accepted as right and true only that which satisfied his own reason.

In 1884 he commenced his great work for Freethought, and no warrior ever fought more valiantly than has Samuel P. Putnam during the twelve years that he has opposed theological tyranny and ecclesiastical aggrandizement. With voice and pen this tireless man has worked. As lecturer, editor, and author, he has assailed the wrongs of Church and State, and defended the rights of man against the cupidity of priests. His heart and soul were put into his words, and his sentences glowed with a fire that revealed the earnestness of his purpose. He tore down what was in the way of progress, he denounced what hindered human advancement, and threw his whole strength and power with splendid energy against the entrenchments of religious bigotry. With perfect faith in man to govern himself, he resisted the encroachments of priestcraft. He has painted the liberty he loved in all the colors of language. His mind could expand only where the intellectual air was free.

Samuel P. Putnam was honest—honest to himself and to the world. He did not cover his face. Hypocrisy was detestable to him. He was willing the world should know him for what he was. He loved life and enjoyed it. He did not pose for a saint, and did not set himself up as a model. Life will bear the noblest men and women when all are true to the truth in their own souls.

The lesson of history warns us against the Church. Theology has always murdered the minds of men. The heart cannot bear its sweetest flowers when imprisoned in the cell of a creed. Man is not to be condemned for thinking differently from others. He is rather to be condemned for not thinking at all.

Mr. Putnam did not falter because he had the crowd against him. He only struggled the harder. He knew that where thousands assented to a statement there were so many slaves to be freed. Authority is opinion accepted without question. Where men are seeking for the right and true, statute and dogma are not helps, but hindrances. Mr. Putnam gave his thought to the world for what it was worth in itself. He appealed to men to think for themselves, to trust their reason and common-sense. He admired manliness, independence, and always respected mental integrity. They who listened to his fervid speech were impressed with the earnestness of the man. His heart, his soul, his whole being, spoke through his lips. The blood of conviction colored his words. The wealth of his mind he gave to the world, and asked in return only that men and women be honest and true to themselves.

As a friend he was loyal and steadfast. His heart beat warmly for those who stood with him and by him.

But his sun has gone down, and the shadows have closed around him. He has passed into the silent realm where all have gone who have lived, and where all must go who are alive.

The loved brother, the true friend, the genial companion, and the brave, earnest worker has gone from mortal eyes.

Farewell!

At the conclusion of the service the body was conveyed to Forest Hill Crematory. Some fifty or more of the friends accompanied it. There were no services at this place other than the final parting. The casket was placed upon the bier in the lobby, and the people gathered walked in reverent silence around it. It was then committed to the flames, passing from sight. The necessary papers were signed, and the mortal career of Samuel P. Putnam was closed. But his memory will live in the hearts of all who love liberty, of all who are true to their honest convictions, of all who admire independence of life, and earnest work for their highest ideals. He was a brave, true man, a loving comrade,

a noble friend, a genial gentleman, large-hearted, magnanimous, without jealousy and without fear. He did the best he could, always and everywhere, and never looked at a dark spot on the horizon when there was a glimpse of sunlight to be had. If the world were peopled with Samuel Putnams, we could do without law. Our courts and prisons would be empty, but our temples filled. Injustice and tyranny would be unknown, but liberty would be enthroned everywhere. Good-fellowship would be the universal rule, and truth would never have to struggle to maintain herself among men. He was, for all, a real Liberal.

—*Truthseeker.*

BOOK CHAT.

A Practical Scheme for Old-Age Pensions, by H. C. Burdett, is sent to us, "reprinted from the *Times*." Mr. Burdett's scheme is mainly one of self-insurance for deferred annuities, all persons saving a shilling a week from the age of twenty-five to be guaranteed £18 per year on attaining sixty. Mr. Burdett was founder of the Royal National Pension Fund for nurses, and the experience given in connection with that Fund is certainly valuable.

Mr. William E. A. Axon devotes a chapter of his recently-issued volume, entitled *Bygone Sussex*, to the "Sussex Muse." Of Sussex poets Shelley is the chief, and of him Mr. Axon gives a most appreciative estimate.

Noticing *To Kumassi with Scott*, by Mr. Musgrave, the *Echo* says: "People who talk glibly about the Christian civilization of West Africa should read Mr. Musgrave. He candidly confesses he does not see what great good the civilized Christian government of Cape Coast Castle has done to the native. Of course, he is keenly alive to the fact that the recent British conquest of Ashanti will be followed by the extirpation of cruel customs, especially the horrible custom of human sacrifice. But he shows us how thin and flimsy is the veneer of civilization which the black has taken from the Christian Englishman. He speaks of missionaries buying 'converts' for so many shillings or dollars ahead. The missionary must have something to show for the money which well-meaning, simple-minded, rather foolish people at home spend upon him. Some of the very worst characters in British West Africa are native converts—nigger methodists."

The Rev. Walter Lloyd, reviewing *The Child, the Wise Man, and the Devil*, in the *Westminster*, under the title of "The Nicene Creed in a Novellette," says: "The Theist can smile at Mr. Kernahan's hysterics, and regret that he is incapable of treating with justice a form of faith which he evidently does not understand." This is pretty much the same as was said, in other words, in the *Freethinker* review, written from the standpoint of an Atheist.

The old question of the authorship of the *Letters of Junius* crops up again in the *Westminster*, Mr. Sibley dealing with "Mr. Lecky on Junius." The great historian, like Lord Macaulay and so many more, is in favor of the claims of Sir P. Francis; but Mr. Sibley puts in a word for the Earl of Shelburne.

The number of the *Crescent* for January 6 gives the first Sura of the Koran in a new English translation, and announces that it will publish a continuous translation of the sacred work until the same has all been rendered into English. Mr. Quilliam's version will have at least the merit of being the first English rendering of the Koran by a genuine Moslem.

We reprint this first Sura just to give our readers a specimen, and because it is repeated by good Moslems at the beginning of all their devotions and undertakings: "In the name of God, Merciful! Compassionate! (1) Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all that is created! (2) The Most Merciful! (3) The King of the day of judgment! (4) Thee do we worship, and of Thee do we crave assistance. (5) Direct us into the right way. (6) Into the path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious. (7) Not of those against whom Thou art incensed, nor of those who go astray."

Last week we called attention to the pious fraud of the S.P.C.K. in "toning down" the expressions of Professor Maspero in his *Ancient History of the Peoples of the Classical East*, by substituting "sacred writings" for "traditions," etc. The Rev. E. McClure, the secretary of the Society, now says the alterations are trifling. "It was our desire merely to soften certain expressions out of regard for the susceptibilities of English readers." Yes; and, out of regard for those delicate susceptibilities, religionists have ever done their best to conceal the fact that so many men of light and leading utterly reject their nonsense.

PROFANE JOKES.

At a certain school not far from Halifax it used to be the daily custom for the scholars to repeat the Apostles' Creed, one beginning, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty"; the next going on, "Maker of heaven and earth," and so on, turn and turn about, until the Creed was concluded. It was also usual for the scholars to occupy the same place day after day, so that a boy always repeated exactly the same bit of creed. This arrangement led to a rather amusing scene one day, when one of the pupils happened to be absent. The Creed was said as usual until they came to the passage, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," when the boy whose turn it was to go on hesitated for a minute, and then said: "Please, sir, him as believes i' th' Holy Ghost isn't here to-day."

Tommy—"Maw, what are the 'early Christians'?" Mrs. Flagg—"A man who gets up and builds the fire for his wife to get breakfast ought to have a right to the title."

"Mama," asked the little four-year-old, "how do you spell 'ginger'?" "Put away your book, dear; it is time for you to go to bed." "Papa, how do you—" "Don't bother me, Katie." "What does it mean when it says—" "Didn't you hear your mother?" Katie threw the book on the floor. "I don't believe there's anybody that loves me," she burst forth, "cept grandpa and God. Grandpa, he is in Michigan, an' I don't know where God is!"

Bishop Burnet, who was a tall, large-boned man, preaching once with some vehemence before King Charles II., closed one of his sentences with a violent thump upon the cushion and this note of interrogation: "Who dares deny it?" "Nobody," said the King, in a whisper, "who stands within the reach of that devilish great fist of yours."

An Edinburgh minister preached one Sunday in a country church. At noon the elder heard one old woman say to another: "Hoo liket ye the sermon to-day?" "Vera weel; but I didna ken til noo thot Sodom and Gomarrah wasna mon and wife." The elder told the parson, who was so tickled that he told the story at his next dinner party. A simpering young woman commented: "Oh, well, I suppose they ought to have been if they were not."

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

INQUIRY into the evidence of a doctrine is not to be made once for all, and then taken as finally settled. It is never lawful to stifle a doubt; for either it can be honestly answered by means of the inquiry already made, or else it proves that the inquiry was not complete. "But," says one, "I am a busy man; I have no time for the long course of study which would be necessary to make me in any degree a competent judge of certain questions, or even able to understand the nature of the arguments." Then he should have no time to believe.—*W. K. Clifford.*

Science is properly more scrupulous than dogma. Dogma gives a charter to mistake; but the very breath of science is a contest with mistake, and must keep the conscience alive.—*George Eliot.*

I shall pass through this world but once; therefore, any good thing that I may do, or any kindness that I may show to my fellow-human creatures, let me do it now; let me not neglect it, or defer it, as I shall not pass this way again.—*Carlyle.*

Inferior generations continually evolve superior. Races from priest-ridden Ireland, Germany, and Italy come here ignorant and brutal, and in the course of a few generations develop into magnificent men and women. Inferior fruits, flowers, hogs, cattle, and horses continually propagate the higher. Invert the process for a few millions of years (we must rid ourselves of Bible chronology), and it requires no difficult stretch of our imagination to trace man to the ape, and it to the lowest order of animal life. Read Haeckel, and you can trace the dawn of intellect to the monad, cell, or sac, which miniature stomach finds crude pleasurable sensations in the assimilation of food. In its struggle to gratify this pleasure it develops memory, energy, reason, etc. To the intellect of an Emerson, Humboldt, and Spencer it is but an evolutionary process. Time does, and degree explains, the rest.—*Otto Wettstein.*

It isn't true that the laws of nature have been capriciously disturbed; that snakes have talked; that women have been turned to salt; that rods have brought water out of rocks. You must in honesty confess that, if these things were presented to us for the first time, we should smile at them.—*Dr. Conan Doyle, "The Stark-Munro Letters," p. 43.*

Would the word "Reverend" be out of place as applied to a circus clown? Not if his jokes were good.

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, G. W. Foote, "The Sorrows of Satan."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Stanley Jones, "Buddhism and Christianity."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Dance and Entertainment.
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, "Greek Ethics and English Morals."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Athenæum, Camden-road, N.W.: 7, H. Rix, "Simplification of Life."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL, Leighton Hall, Kentish Town: 11, Lesson by F. J. Gould. Children invited.
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11, Sunday-school; 7, Mrs. Gilliland Husband, "Love's Coming of Age."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, W. R. Washington Sullivan, "The Moral Sentiment."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, R. Rosetti will lecture.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3—weather permitting—P. Ward, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to the Secularist Platform."

COUNTRY.

BLACKBURN (Venetian Hall, Darwin-street): January 15, at 7.30, O. Cohen, "Do we Need a Religion?"
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, H. Snell, "Voltaire and Reason, Rousseau and Sentiment."
DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7.30, W. H. Whitney, A reading.
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, Discussion Class—G. Faulkner, "The Origin of the Christian Devil"; 6.30, A. G. Nostik, F.G.S., "The Origin of the Scenery of Scotland"—with lantern illustrations.
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A lecture.
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, W. T. Haydon, "The Development of Tools."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Watts—11, "Colonel Ingersoll and Freethought in America"; 3, "Moses and the Jewish Religion"; 6.30, "Sin and Secular Salvation."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' Annual and quarterly meeting; 5, Tea; 7, F. H. Hart, "More Country Folk of Thomas Hardy."
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting. January 19 (Union-hall, Coronation-street): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Case Against Christianity."
STANLEY (Albert Hall, Stanley): O. Cohen—11, "Evolution and Social Problems"; 7, "Foreign Missions."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—January 16, 17, and 18, West Stanley; 19 and 24, Manchester; 25, Elmington-street Labor Hall, Manchester; 27 and 28, Debate at Derby with Mr. G. Wise; 31, Edinburgh.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—February 24, Leicester. March 7, New Brompton.

POSITIVISM.

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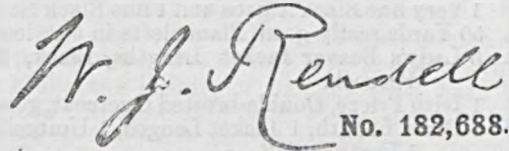
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- „ D 1 Suit Length, any color; 1 Dress Length, any color; 1 Lady's Umbrella; 1 Gent's Umbrella.
- „ E 1 Overcoat or Suit Length, and 1 pair All Wool Blankets.
- „ F 1 Dress Length, Linings and Buttons to match, and 1 Overcoat or Suit Length.
- „ G 2 Pairs Trousers to measure (give length inside leg and waist measurement). Say lined or not.
- „ H 1 Dress Length, Linings and Buttons to match, and 1 Pair Trousers to match.
- „ I 3 Scotch Tweed Dress Lengths, all warranted pure wool, 6 yards each, double width.
- „ J 6 Sailor Suits to fit boys up to 8 years old.
- „ K 1 Pair All Wool Blankets, 1 Pair Bed Sheets, 1 Quilt, and 1 Tablecloth.
- „ L 2 Noted "Bruno" Dress Lengths, any color, Linings and Buttons to match.
- „ M 1 Bruno Dress Length, 2 Flannelette Nightdresses, 2 Chemises, 2 Pairs Knickers, and 2 Skirts.
- „ N 1 Gent's Scarboro' Mackintosh. Give chest (over coat) and full length measurements.
- „ O 1 Lady's Fashionable Waterproof, latest design (give bust measurement and length at back).
- „ P 1 Very fine Black Alpaca and 1 fine Black Serge Dress Length.
- „ Q 50 Yards really good Flannelette in 5 or less different colors.
- „ R 3 Lady's Beaver Jacket Lengths, Black, Navy, Brown, Fawn, Myrtle, or Peacock.
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- „ V 1 Bundle of Remnants for Boys' Suits.
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