

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

## BEARDING THE TURK.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."—JESUS CHRIST (Matthew x. 34).

The Greeks have not found that bearding the Turk is a very pleasant pastime. Whatever else the Turk can or cannot do, he can certainly fight; and as the fact is far from being novel, the Greeks have no excuse for not taking it into their calculations.

We should be hard-hearted indeed if we did not feel compassion for the Greeks in their present extremity. We pity them profoundly. They are paying the penalty of their madness, but it must be admitted that their patriotic insanity was fanned, rather than allayed, by their friends all over Europe, and particularly in England.

Unfortunately the penalty does not fall entirely upon the most responsible persons. It is horrible enough to read of "bodies torn to bloody pulp" and "trunks stripped of their members" on the battlefield, after the roaring artillery had done its awful work; but to us, at any rate, it is still more horrible to read of the panic-stricken crowds of old people, of women, and of children, fleeing southward through Thessaly. Imagine the terror of these poor helpless creatures, the bleeding hearts they carry in their breasts, the agony of every step they take! These are the worst horrors of war, and they should be remembered by those who challenge the arbitrament of the sword.

Happily there still remains the Concert of Europe to see that Greece is not subjected to the final indignities of the vanquished. Happily, too, the Turks are fighting under the eyes of Europe, and they appear to be maintaining unusual discipline in this campaign.

We were bound to hear a good deal about Turkish atrocities, and the Christian papers, especially those of the screaming order, did not hesitate to print the most circumstantial reports of the mutilation of Greek prisoners, while in one instance it was gravely related how the Turks had shut a number of wounded Greeks in a church and burnt them all alive. All these reports turn out to be lively efforts of Christian imagination. The Turks, whatever may be their motives, are observing the most civilized rules of warfare, and behaving better than the Greeks might have done had they been victorious.

When this struggle is concluded, we should hardly think that the Greeks will congratulate themselves on having demonstrated the military strength and capacity of Turkey. It is perfectly clear that the Sick Man is far from being moribund, and that the "bag and baggage" policy of Mr. Gladstone is far easier to talk about than to carry into effect. Three or four hundred thousand such troops as Edhem Pasha is commanding could not be turned out of Europe without an immense sacrifice of blood and treasure. And for this reason it is all the more advisable that the Sick Man's estate should be liquidated slowly, and, as near as possible, peacefully. That the Turkish despotism in Europe is doomed is beyond a reasonable doubt; but its gradual extinction by diplomacy is better than its sudden extinction by violence. And, after all—strange as it may sound to Christian ears—the fate of the millions of Mohammedans still in Europe is worthy of some consideration.

Further, it is always well to recognize facts; and it is a fact that throughout the whole of this trouble the Turk has had the sense to be always in the right. He has acted with consummate propriety. He did not flout the Powers,

as Greece did; on the contrary, he politely told them to make up their minds and let him know the result; and, as far as they did make up their minds, he gave them his co-operation. When the Greeks massed their troops near his frontier, he massed his own in convenient proximity; and he stood there quietly until the Greeks crossed over and pulled his beard; at which point he was justified by the law of nations in declaring war. He has shown himself a good diplomatist as well as a good fighter, and there was something excruciatingly comic in the pious gravity with which he informed Europe that he did not aim at any sort of advantage, but was only bent on maintaining his own dignity.

The Greeks put themselves in the wrong, and were the real aggressors; and the Christian Powers, with all their force and diplomacy, could not keep the smallest Christian kingdom from playing the fool in a sanguinary manner.

Jesus Christ is often called, facetiously enough, the Prince of Peace; but the idea that Christianity produces in nations a disinclination for fighting—especially when they think they can gain something by it—is a delusion which is dispelled by the slightest acquaintance with history, and with the real facts of the present condition of the world. It is Christian nations that build battleships, make torpedoes, manufacture rifles and artillery, and produce dynamite and unlimited gunpowder. Other nations, like Japan, that want to get into touch with what is called civilization, have to borrow the science and art of war from the Christians; indeed, it has been boasted by Mr. Gladstone, as one of the most striking and convincing proofs of the divine origin of Christianity, that the Christian nations command an overwhelming preponderance of the military and naval forces of the world.

In the present case it is the Christians, and not the Mohammedans, who have disturbed the peace of Europe. The Turk declared war in self-protection. Virtually he told the Greeks that they were not going to pull his beard, and knock him on the back of the head, and pretend all the time that they were not committing assault and battery. He told them, so to speak, that they would have to fight under the Queensberry rules. Yet, in face of these obvious and indisputable facts, the pro-Greek papers in England pretend that the Turk is making war upon Greece in mere wanton brutality, and they call upon all Christians to back up their co-religionists. These gentlemen seem to think that a Christian must be right, and a Mohammedan must be wrong, and that to judge according to the facts of the case is rank blasphemy.

Had any Christian nation acted towards another Christian nation as Greece acted towards Turkey, it would have been universally condemned. But the case is altered by a difference in religion. Greece, being Christian, could do no wrong against Turkey, being Mohammedan. It was Christian fanaticism in England that egged on the Greeks to a policy of desperation, even at the risk of provoking a European war, which would dwarf everything the world has ever witnessed in the way of slaughter and devastation. And the cream of the joke is, that these very English Christians who egged the Greeks on, and are now screaming over their inevitable defeat, are at other times the most unctuous eulogists of peace. They remind us of the temperate toper who was a teetotaler between drinks. They have Christian reasons against war when there is none brewing, and Christian reasons for it when there is a chance of a good scrimmage. And all this shows that Christianity never will, as it never did, assist the cause of peace and brotherhood. The evils

of the modern world cannot be cured by pious sentimentality. The remedy is to be found in the study of history and economics, in education and common sense, in reason and enlightenment. All diseases are natural, and the remedies must also be natural. When prayer cures a pestilence, Christianity will cure the war-fever of Europe.

While we are referring to prayer, we may as well draw attention to the extraordinary way in which Christ has answered the prayers of his Greek disciples and their Christian sympathizers in other lands. On the very day that a pious show was held at Athens, with the King and Queen and the Archbishop, in the midst of a vast crowd, soliciting Christ to give the Greeks victory, Edhem Pasha at the head of his Moslem infidels began his attack on Larissa, which ended in the ignominious flight of the army of the Cross. Call you that backing of your friends? The situation invites the caustic wit of Jack Falstaff, if the fat knight were only alive to make it the subject of his reflections.

But we will not conclude with a joke or a sneer. The situation is too serious and too painful. Men are being slain, wives widowed, and children orphaned. The tragedy remains in spite of witticisms, and we wish to see it ended. Our hope is that Lord Salisbury, who is a Tory, but after all an Englishman, will do his utmost to induce the Powers to intervene. According to strict etiquette, it is requisite for one of the combatants to say he has had enough of it, before inviting the friendly services of other powers. But there is something higher than etiquette, and allowance should be made for the susceptibilities, and even for the frenzy, of Greece. Surely the Concert should be capable of arresting the bloodshed and averting further misery. Instead of calling Lord Salisbury a liar, a knave, and a poltroon, as he is being called by one pro-Greek journal, we would appeal to him, in the name of reason and humanity, to use the influence of England for the restoration of peace.

G. W. FOOTE.

### IN AN ANCIENT MIRROR.

O wad the power the giftie gie us  
To see oursel's as ithers see us.—Burns.

A NEW satire on English life, institutions, and religion has just been published by Fisher Unwin, with the above title. It purports to be a translation of a newly-discovered fragment of Herodotus, translated by Herbert Flowerdew. But, although the style of the gossiping old Greek father of history is well preserved, the disguise is as thin and transparent as Dacca muslin. "Herodotus" describes the strange manners and customs of the barbarians who inhabit the island of Glandenos, who prefer foreigners to rule over them, and so bought one king from Skotia, one from Ollando, and one from Ermangea, and whose kings and queens marry other barbarians, "so that children shall be born to be made queens and kings who shall be as little as possible natives of Glandenos." The first chapter is indeed a pungent satire on monarchy, with which we have little to do beyond recording our opinion that, in the midst of effusive loyalty at a record reign, it is well worth reading.

The next chapter, dealing with the religion of this strange people, though by no means the brightest in the book, is the one with which we are here chiefly concerned. Our author begins:—

"Now, among the Glandeniæ it is considered that only those thoughts are becoming and pleasing to the gods which require a great effort to think, or believe them. For they say that to believe those things which are true is very easy, and can be done by any man; but that to believe those things which are false requires much skill and ability....."

"For this reason they love greatly the man who tells them what they know to be false, thinking that they will gain great credit with the gods by saying that they believe it....."

"To believe what is known to be false is indeed the chief part of their religion, and for this reason they have handed down many incredible stories—of fishes swallowing men without injuring them, and of men walking on water without sinking, in order that those who say they believe them may be accounted the most religious and gain most credit with the gods. And they

invent many ideas which cannot be thought, saying that these gods are three in number, and yet that there is but one, and that the one god made everything which is, yet did not make that which is unholy; so that, by saying they think these ideas when they cannot be thought, they may be accounted very righteous."

So, too, they account it a worthy thing to say the gods require one thing, and yet do the very reverse. The Glandeniæ carefully conceal what they really think; and "one who believes what he really believes is called an unbeliever, and one who says that he believes what all know he cannot, he is called a believer." Thus the historian is only able to give an idea of what they say they believe, such as that Zeus once appeared among mortals in the form of a humble joiner, in order to teach men to be humble and not care for riches:—

"And since they say that this god, Kristos, took the form of a joiner, therefore they despise and condemn all joiners and such artificers, and speak lightly of them, and oppress them, in order, I suppose, that they may remain humble and be like the Kristos."

Since they were told to despise riches, they therefore do their utmost to accumulate them; and, in order that they may carry out the teaching to love one another, "those who would not love them as Kristos commanded, they have fought with and burnt and imprisoned and tortured until they did, so that the command of Kristos should be obeyed." He then relates how they encourage humility by their selection of their ministers of Kristos, and their many differences with regard to his teachings and temples.

"Now, this is the manner in which the temples are built in Glandenos. Having borrowed money, they beseech Kristos that they may be able to repay it, and for this purpose beg money from all such as come to worship. And if each shows his humility in the house of Kristos by giving less than his neighbor, then, indeed, they resort to a strange practice, for pretending to be merchants, the men and women worshippers, having made articles for which there is no use, sell them to such as do not desire them, employing the fairest of their women to allure the younger of their men into purchasing them at a great cost. And in this manner the debt is repaid. And some of the temples are made beautiful, and some are made hideous; for some who worship Kristos think that he desires beauty, and some imagine that he loves only that which is without grace."

He then tells how they try the humility of the people by putting the poor in back seats, that they may be known as the Lord's elect. He describes how they keep the seventh day and the legends connected therewith, how they send out ministers to introduce their goods to other lands and teach them that they should love one another as all the Glandeniæ do, and that they should love the people of Glandeniæ most of all:—

"This they do that their own merchants and those who make strong wine may come without fear, and, giving their wares to the strangers, take all that they have. This they do, thinking that the strangers, having drunk the strong wine, will die, and, having believed in Kristos, will sit among the gods."

For they say that when they appear to die they go to rest in Olympus, and know no more grief:—

"And for this reason, when one among them is sick, he summons a leech hastily, giving him much gold, and beseeching him urgently to keep him alive that he may suffer griefs a little longer, instead of having perfect happiness. And if he recover, then his friends thank Zeus that he has not allowed him to be happy in Olympus; and if he die, then his friends thank Zeus that he has permitted him."

Thus they do to please Kristos, who is expected to return:—

"And some, indeed, announce when the Kristos will come, taking much wealth in return for their knowledge; and, having said that the Kristos will come in a few days, they take the reward which has been given to them, and lay it up in a safe place to provide for the needs of their old age.

"And when the time has come, and Kristos has not returned, then they announce his coming for another day, and again take great reward for their knowledge from those who believe them.

"For among the Glandeniæ it is a custom that none should give any knowledge about the god Kristos unless he receive either wealth or honor for giving it."

The remainder of the book deals with the absurdities of this strange people in politics, law, and social life, in their treatment of crimes, and of the poor, to whom, having first caused hunger, "they give great sums to the priest to tell them that those who hunger are of more account with the gods, and shall have the more to eat after they are dead. Yet do they not hunger on this account themselves, nor do the priests whom they have paid to declare such things." The boldest chapter of all treats of the woman question, which is dealt with so much from the New Woman's point of view that we might be tempted to think "Herbert Flowerdew" was of the once gentler sex, save that no woman has hitherto shown the powers of sustained satire displayed by the author of *In an Ancient Mirror*.

J. M. WHEELER.

### THE CROSS AND ITS INFLUENCE.

UNDER the heading of "The Sequel of Calvary," the *Christian World* of April 15 contains a special article in which the writer, referring to the religious aspect of Passion Week, extols the alleged crucifixion and resurrection of Christ as the two most important verities of history; and he claims that in the "Sequel of Calvary" is to be found "the essential that actually wrought and actually works as a living energy upon men and upon institutions." The New Testament account of the death and resurrection of Jesus he regards as being beyond all doubt, and to the influence of these events he attributes all that has been useful in the promotion of the general progress of the last two thousand centuries.

This article affords a fair sample of theological assumption and Christian self-congratulation. It assumes, with an amusing confidence, that Christian pretensions should be, and are, beyond question, and that the Cross has ever been, since its exhibition at Calvary, the symbol of right-doing. The fact that thousands of ready-to-believe persons are victims of these delusions prompts us to inquire upon what grounds such suppositions are based. We have long since arrived at the conclusion that the popular Christian faith is one of the greatest intellectual frauds that have ever perverted the human mind. And the more we study its history, the more do we feel justified in this conclusion. Both its foundation and its superstructure rest upon conjectures and assertions that, we think, cannot be proved. From the positive manner in which certain professed Christians write about Jesus dying upon the Cross, and rising from the tomb the third day, many easy-going believers are led to infer that these events are demonstrated facts. But they are not, as an impartial examination of the evidence put forward in favor of their reality will prove. To be candid, our opinion is that, supposing such a person as the Jesus of the New Testament ever lived, he did not die on the Cross, and, therefore, the story of his resurrection is one of those theological fictions which were so prevalent in the early ages of Christianity. Before, however, dealing with these two incidents of the Christian faith—the death and resurrection of Jesus—we propose to consider a few of the allegations made by the writer of the article in the *Christian World* as to the "Sequel of Calvary."

He says: "Christianity is a law of conduct which its founder first expounded, and then illustrated by his own life and death." This is an instance of that chicanery in which Christian advocates are so fond of indulging. What is that "law of conduct" that Christ is said to have expounded? Why, this: A disregard of the mundane duties of life; non-resistance to the evils of existence; neglect of the requirements of domestic happiness; the encouragement of poverty; and the abnegation of self-reliance. He did his best to inspire a contempt for property, and he discouraged the labor which secured it. When he sent his disciples forth upon an important mission, he instructed them to take neither purse nor script, but to depend upon Providence and charity. Now, it is evident that to obey such a "law of conduct" as is here set forth would be inimical to any well-conducted order of society. To indulge in such sophistry may suit the purposes of theologians, but it will never serve to promote the best interests of mankind.

As to Christ illustrating his law of conduct by his "own life and death," the very opposite is the fact. He taught

peace, but he "came not to send peace, but a sword"; he taught obedience to parents, but he enjoined hatred, upon the part of children, to their fathers and mothers; he advised mildness of language, but he addressed those who differed from him as "fools and vipers"; he counselled love, but he threatened the very opposite to those who could not accept his narrow faith; he "expounded" the virtue and consolation of reliance upon his heavenly father, yet he lost faith in this heavenly father in the hour of need. According to the New Testament, Jesus was a man who during his life preached a faith which, it was said, not only afforded consolation through life, but was also capable of robbing death of its terrors; yet, when the hour of death approached, when the period had arrived for him to prove to the world the efficacy of this faith, we find him tortured with agony and racked with fear. In that scene, which was not only to rivet the attention of an amazed multitude, but also to consecrate a life of divinity—a scene which was not only to be the great climax to the scheme of redemption, but was also to remain a lasting monument of love to a wondering people; at this moment, when it was thought that the hopes of his believers were about to be sealed, when he should have maintained his position bravely and nobly, we find him weak, vacillating, and in bitter despair, praying that the cup might pass from him, and ultimately yielding up a sorrowful life, after uttering unavailing reproaches in those memorable words, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Where, we may ask, was the utility of such a "law of conduct" that was, and is, so defective both in theory and in practice?

We are next told that "the sequel of Calvary has been the riddle of the world. The problem is that of a career carried on under human conditions, whose greatest energies and most vivid influence have been exerted from beyond the tomb." Here we have a mixture of truth and mysticism. True there is much associated both with the story of the Cross, and with Christianity in general, that is an enigma which the human mind is quite unable to unravel; and that is one of the many reasons why Christianity is found not to be in harmony with the intelligence of the age. The entire system is so very incoherent that even those who profess to believe it are incapable of understanding many of its principal sayings and teachings. This is not surprising, considering that Christ is reported to have said: "All these things are done in parables; that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand" (Mark iv. 11, 12). But why should the "sequel of Calvary" be "the riddle of the world"? If its general results were beneficial to mankind, then to them its advantages should be apparent. Such, however, has not been the case. But to us the influence of the Crucifixion is no "riddle." Its failure as a moral and social regenerating force has been as clear as it has been decisive. Did the death of Christ abolish the supposed effects of Adam's fall? Has the world experienced less pain and misery, less crime and injustice, through this tragic event? Did the erection of the Cross frighten or appal the tyrants? Did the voice from the heights of Calvary reach the captives and cause the slaves to go free? Did it destroy error and establish truth? Did it supplant ignorance and vice with knowledge and virtue? In short, has the "sequel of Calvary" produced those conditions of society that would render it impossible for man to be depraved or poor? We answer that it has achieved none of these results; and the "riddle" about it appears to us to be why so many persons should be induced to believe the statement of the writer in the *Christian World*, that, "as the ages have rolled on, it has become increasingly manifest that it is here at Calvary, and nowhere else, men have to look for hope and moral renovation." A more groundless assertion than this has seldom been made.

The allegation, that "the problem is that of a career carried on under human conditions, whose greatest energies and most vivid influence have been exerted from beyond the tomb," is as mischievous as it is senseless. Such mystic writing may suit the confiding believer, but it can never convince the honest, impartial inquirer. What experience can we have of the exertion of any "energies and influence from beyond the tomb"? Even supposing such activities to prevail, we can know nothing of them, and therefore cannot logically connect them with Calvary. Death was a reality, and man's condition beyond the tomb, whatever it may be, existed before the advent of Christ; and all this wild talk about his introducing new energies,

etc., is only emotional speculation, called forth by theological assumption. The world has suffered too long from the promulgation of such folly and error, and all lovers of truth and mental freedom should deem it their duty to counteract the mischief that teachings of this kind produce, by urging the necessity of men and women confining themselves to the study of realities, instead of being led away by the phantoms of a degrading theology.

We are further informed that, while science "has wrought marvels in the external world," it cannot "take out of the human heart the malign passions from which such [evil] deeds come." Neither can Christianity, if we may judge from the extensive force and constant operation of those passions to-day, not only among "the men of the world," but also within the "Christian fold." We have yet to learn of any power that will entirely alter the nature of man. The most, probably, that can be done in this direction is to *improve* human character by the subjugation of its inferior, and the elevation of its superior, qualities. This can be effectually achieved, where its accomplishment is possible, by physical discipline, intellectual development, and moral training. The scientific use of secular agencies in securing healthy and ennobling conditions is the surest way of stimulating the desire and intention to practise that conduct which is commendable in itself and beneficial in its results. Without the aid of science the condition of society would render right-doing almost impossible, and in such a state all the religions in the world would be powerless in regenerating the human race. Christianity, of *itself*, has ever been impotent to raise man to a high moral and intellectual eminence. Where this elevation has taken place in connection with the profession of Christianity, it has been where secular elements predominated over the theology of the faith. This is the lesson learned both from individuals and from nations.

The writer in the *Christian World* dwells upon what he terms the "facts" of Christ's death on the Cross, and his resurrection; and from these supposed events the "sequel" is represented as being pregnant with good results. As there are so many fallacies entertained upon these subjects, we intend to deal with each of them in separate articles.

CHARLES WATTS.

## INGERSOLL'S NEW LECTURE.

### ON "TRUTH."

(Concluded from page 261.)

#### CLERGY CATER TO THE CONGREGATION.

THESE dear ministers, when they have poor congregations, thunder against trusts, syndicates, and corporations—against wealth, fashion, and luxury. They tell about Dives and Lazarus, paint rich men in hell, and beggars in heaven. If their congregations are rich, they turn their guns in the other direction.

They have no confidence in education—in the development of the brain. They appeal to hopes and fears. They ask no one to think—to investigate. They insist that all shall believe. Credulity is the greatest of virtues, and doubt the deadliest of sins.

These men are the enemies of science—of intellectual progress. They ridicule and calumniate the great thinkers. They deny everything that conflicts with the "sacred Scriptures." They still believe in the astronomy of Joshua and the geology of Moses. They believe in the miracles of the past, and deny the demonstrations of the present. They are the foes of facts—the enemies of knowledge. A desire to be happy here they regard as wicked and worldly; but a desire to be happy in another world as virtuous and spiritual.

Every orthodox church is founded on mistake and falsehood. Every good orthodox minister asserts what he does not know, and denies what he does know.

What are the orthodox clergy doing for the good of mankind?

Absolutely nothing.

What harm are they doing?

On every hand they sow the seeds of superstition. They paralyze the minds and pollute the imagination of children. They fill their hearts with fear. By their teachings thousands become insane. With them hypo-

crisis is respectable and candor infamous. They enslave the minds of men. Under their teachings men waste and misdirect their energies, abandon the ends that can be accomplished, dedicate their lives to the impossible, worship the unknown, pray to the inconceivable, and become the trembling slaves of a monstrous myth born of ignorance and fashioned by the trembling hands of fear.

Superstition is the serpent that crawls and hisses in every Eden, and fastens its poisonous fangs in the hearts of men.

It is the deadliest foe of the human race.

#### A PLEA FOR HONESTY.

Let us be honest. Let us preserve the veracity of our souls. Let education commence in the cradle—in the lap of the loving mother. This is the first school. The teacher, the mother, should be absolutely honest.

The nursery should not be an asylum for lies.

Parents should be modest enough to be truthful—honest enough to admit their ignorance. Nothing can be taught as true that cannot be demonstrated.

Every child should be taught to doubt, to inquire, to demand reasons. Every soul should defend itself—should be on its guard against falsehood, deceit, and mistake, and should beware of all kinds of confidence men, including those in the pulpit.

Children should be taught to express their doubts, to demand reasons. The object of education should be to develop the brain, to quicken the senses. Every school should be a mental gymnasium. The child should be equipped for the battle of life. Credulity, implicit obedience, are the virtues of slaves and the enslavers of the free. All should be taught that there is nothing too sacred to be investigated, too holy to be understood.

Each mind has the right to lift all curtains, withdraw all veils, scale all walls, explore all recesses, all heights, all depths for itself, in spite of church or priest, or creed or book.

The great volume of Nature should be open to all. None but the intelligent and honest can really read this book. Prejudice clouds and darkens every page. Hypocrisy reads and misquotes, and credulity accepts the quotation. Superstition cannot read a line or spell the shortest word. And yet this volume holds all knowledge, all truth, and is the only source of thought. Mental liberty means the right of all to read this book. Here the Pope and peasant are equal. Each must read for himself, and each ought to honestly and fearlessly give to his fellow men what he learns.

#### NATURE THE TRUE TEACHER.

There is no authority in churches or priests, no authority in numbers or majorities. The only authority is Nature—the facts we know. Facts are the masters, the enemies of the ignorant, the servants and friends of the intelligent.

Ignorance is the mother of mystery and misery, of superstition and sorrow, of waste and want.

Intelligence is the only light. It enables us to keep the highway, to avoid the obstructions, and to take advantage of the forces of nature. It is the only lever capable of raising mankind. To develop the brain is to civilize the world. Intelligence reaves the heavens of winged and frightful monsters—drives ghosts and leering fiends from the darkness, and floods with light the dungeons of fear.

All should be taught that there is no evidence of the existence of the supernatural; that the man who bows before an idol of wood or stone is just as foolish as the one who prays to an imagined god; that all worship has for its foundation the same mistake, the same ignorance, the same fear; that it is just as foolish to believe in a personal god as in a personal devil, just as foolish to believe in great ghosts as little ones.

So all should be taught that the forces, the facts in nature, cannot be controlled or changed by prayer or praise, by supplication, ceremony, or sacrifice; that there is no magic, no miracle; that force can be overcome only by force, and that the whole world is natural.

All should be taught that man must protect himself; that there is no power superior to nature that cares for man; that nature has neither pity nor hatred; that her forces act without the slightest regard for man; that she produces without intention, and destroys without regret.

#### USEFULNESS IS REAL RELIGION.

All should be taught that usefulness is the bud and

flower and fruit of real religion. The popes and cardinals, the bishops, priests, and parsons, are all useless. They produce nothing. They live on the labor of others. They are parasites that feed on the frightened. They are vampires that suck the blood of honest toil. Every church is an organized beggar. Every one lives on alms—on alms collected by force and fear. Every orthodox church promises heaven and threatens hell, and these promises and threats are made for the sake of alms, for revenue. Every church cries, "Believe and give." A new era is dawning on the world. We are beginning to believe in the religion of usefulness.

TRUE TEACHERS OF MANKIND.

The men who felled the forests, cultivated the earth, spanned the rivers with bridges of steel, built railways and canals, the great ships, invented the locomotives and engines, supplying the countless wants of man; the men who invented the telegraphs and cables, and freighted the electric spark with thought and love; the men who invented the looms and spindles that clothe the world, the inventors of printing and the great presses that fill the earth with poetry, fiction, and fact, that save and keep all knowledge for the children yet to be; the inventors of all the wonderful machines whose wheels and levers seem to think and deftly mould from wood and steel the things we use; the men who have explored the heavens and traced the orbits of the stars, who have read the story of the world in mountain range and billowed sea; the men who have lengthened life and conquered pain; the great philosophers and naturalists, who have filled the world with light; the great poets, whose thoughts have charmed the souls; the great painters and sculptors, who have made the canvas speak, the marble live; the great orators, who have swayed the world; the composers, who have given their souls to sound, the captains of industry, the producers, the soldiers who have battled for the right, the vast host of useful men—these are our Christs, our apostles, and our saints. The triumphs of science are our sacred scriptures, and the force that is in every atom and in every star—in everything that lives and grows and thinks, that hopes and suffers—is the only possible god.

AN EPISCOPAL VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE.

THE *Westminster Gazette* of April 14 publishes a *résumé* of a sermon preached on that day by the Bishop of London at St. Margaret's, Lothbury. Unless the paragraph gives an exceedingly misleading account of Dr. Creighton's sermon, it is difficult to see what there was in it to "rivet" the attention of the Master and Wardens of the Worshipful Company of Merchant Tailors, present on the occasion. The notice in the *Westminster* has as a sub-heading, "The Moral of Startling Newspaper Bills"; it was, therefore, rather hard on the public to leave out the moral—for diligent perusal and re-perusal failed to find it, or purpose either. It is just possible that in this respect an injustice has been done to the sermon.

The notice says: "Taking his text from St. Matthew xxvi. 56, 'Then all the disciples forsook him and fled,' he [Dr. Creighton] said that, as every Holy Week came round, the splendid character of the mighty and eternal drama of human history which it commemorated, and taken morely as a literary representation, demonstrated that the verities of life were only brought vividly before one in the time of a great crisis."

As this somewhat involved sentence may not be a faithful reproduction of the sermon, we will not stay to criticize its value as a "literary representation," but proceed to inquire as to what were the "verities of life" which, according to the Bishop, the "Holy Week" brought into prominence. There is not much to guide us in our inquiry, nor is it quite clear what is here meant by the verities of life; but the context would seem to show that they are characteristics in men and women which lie hidden until some startling occurrence reveals them to the world. The following quotation is apparently intended to carry out the argument: "In the history of the Passion every person mentioned—from the shifty politician, Pontius Pilate, down to the commonest Roman soldier—afforded national and

individual exhibitions of every sort of character, phase of feeling, and view of life." This is true, no doubt; but, with the exception of the Apostles, we cannot see that these personages revealed, during this particular week, any hitherto unsuspected vices or virtues. The "shifty politician, Pontius Pilate," still true to his character, shifts his responsibility on to other shoulders; the "commonest Roman soldier" does not appear to have distinguished himself in any special manner; with regard to the three women mentioned, as they are described as permanent types of womanhood, their characters are obviously not the result of the particular "crisis" referred to. We may remark, by the way, that the extremely sketchy description given in the Gospels of the mother of Jesus, and Mary, the wife of Cleophas, hardly justifies their being called "types of womanhood." The former was, according to Dr. Creighton, "the purest, noblest, and most dignified of her sex." As detraction is uncongenial to us, we will only say, with regard to this assertion, that though, in our judgment, there is absolutely nothing to prove her claim to these attributes, there is nothing to show that she did not possess at least the two last; imagination may, therefore, idealize her as much as it pleases, only it is rather unwise to dogmatize about what is little more than an abstraction.

Mary, the wife of Cleophas, is mentioned once, or at the most twice, in the Gospels, and then merely as one present at the Crucifixion; there is consequently not much ground to go upon in seeking for her counterpart in modern woman. Judging only by what is told of her, we are afraid the "type" would be found among those interested in executions.

We now come to the Bishop's view of the conduct of the Apostles during Passion Week, and it is rather depressing to find that, inferentially, he has formed a very poor opinion of human character. He says: "While we, regarding the flight of the Apostles, impartially and judicially considered it cowardly, it really was most natural." We have already said that the Apostles were not to be numbered among those who did not reveal any new traits of character on this occasion. We are of opinion that their action—considering their long companionship with Jesus, and their protestations of love and affection towards him—was more or less unexpected; consequently their cowardly desertion of their friend and Master threw a new light on their characters. The Bishop seems almost to excuse their conduct when he says "it was really most natural," and to forget that history records countless instances where love and faithfulness triumphed over the weakness of mortal nature, and faced danger even to the death for a loved friend—a devotion which, sad to relate, the Prophet of Nazareth had not power to call forth.

The Bishop proceeds to give a not particularly happy illustration of his meaning by quoting a Russian writer's vivid description "of the selfishness, self-assertion, and fright of people on a ship on fire, one poor woman alone acting courageously." From this discouraging and pessimistic view of the inherent cowardice in man, we turn with a thrill of exultation to an account in a daily paper of the splendid discipline displayed, on the occasion of the wreck of the transport *Warren Hastings*, by the troops of all ranks who were being conveyed from the Cape to Mauritius, only two lives out of twelve hundred and forty-six being lost. This is an episode in the world's history worth recording. At the recital of such an act of heroism we realize what grand potentialities for good there are in man, and half unconsciously resolve to add, if possible, our modest quota to the sum of human greatness by a life well lived. What moral can be deduced by dwelling on a cowardly action, and calling it "natural," we do not see.

The *résumé* of the sermon concludes with the following lucid remark: "The Apostles, in fact, like so many people did now—as they afterwards confessed—endeavored to make the best of the natural man, without entering into the spiritual region at all."

This sentence is really too much for us. Perhaps the Master and Wardens of the Worshipful Company of Merchant Tailors will explain the meaning which lies concealed therein.

V. R.

The blessed work of helping the world forward does not wait to be done by perfect men.—George Eliot.

He who knows only one religion knows none.—Goethe.

## ACID DROPS.

CONSTITUTION-SQUARE, in Athens, was the scene of a striking ceremony on April 23, the Greek Good Friday. The king, queen, and ministers went in procession to the cathedral, where Mass was to be celebrated. The procession stopped in the middle of Constitution-square, which was thronged with people; while the Metropolitan, wearing his gold-embroidered robes and a glittering tiara on his head, offered up prayer in a loud, clear voice, and invoked the protection of God for the soldiers who had gone to defend the national honor, and to fight for the glory of the cross. In less than twenty-four hours the Metropolitan's prayer was answered. The Greeks were in headlong flight from Larissa, and the soldiers of the Crescent were in full possession of their camp.

According to the *Crescent*, the Sultan has sent a cypher wire from Constantinople, stating that "Turkey has no desire for territory, but must protect her Muslim subjects from Christian outrage." It is amusing to see the Sultan teaching Christians that he can play the "outrage" game as well as they can.

"Let all Mussulmans," the Sultan says, "everywhere pray for the success of the armies of the Commander of the Faithful." Up to date it seems that their prayers are answered. Allah's soldiers are going ahead, and Christ's are running away.

Mr. Richard Davey has just published an important work, through Messrs. Chapman & Hall, on *The Sultan and His Subjects*, which is spoken of in the highest terms of praise by all the reviewers. We are naturally pleased to find that this well-informed writer corroborates (of course unintentionally) nearly all that we have said about the Turks in our recent articles. Mr. Davey condemns the Turkish Government as an unmitigated despotism, and, in the hands of a weak fanatic like Abdul Hamid, a very cruel despotism too; but he stands up for the character of the average Turk in the ordinary affairs of life. He says that in all classes you find "courtesy, frugality, sobriety, patience, industry, kindness to animals and children, and a far higher sense of honor and truthfulness than will be found in a corresponding class among the Christians."

"There is no finer people in the world," Mr. Davey says, "than the lower orders of the Mohammedan population in Constantinople." We commend this to the attention of the Christian fanatics in England, who talk as if the Greek could do no wrong, and the Turk could do nothing right.

The Turk is an honest trader. "The Greek and the Armenian shopkeepers," Mr. Davey says, "will almost invariably cheat you, but the Mohammedan never, unless, indeed, contact with Western civilization has absolutely demoralized him." The last part of this sentence is a particularly bitter pill for Christendom.

Mr. Davey explains how it is that the average Turk is capable of such cruelties as those of Bulgaria and Armenia. He is fanatical in religion. The entire nation, with the exception of a few thousand educated men, are in the religious condition which prevailed in Europe when Christianity was unchecked by other agencies, and our forefathers butthered each other by the myriad for a difference of opinion. This is what we have said all along. It is religious fanaticism that turns the average Turk into a bloodthirsty devil. While under that sinister influence he is a madman, and, of course, his insanity is stimulated by his rulers, who use it for their own wicked purposes. Evidently the Roman poet was not far wrong when he declared religion to be the most fruitful cause of the evils that afflict humanity.

As the *Freethinker* long ago confidently announced when Diana Vaughan was first put forward as an ex-high priestess of the sect of Luciferans, who had interviewed Lucifer himself at Charleston in 1889, that lady was the creation of Jogand Pagés, better known by his pseudonym of "Leo Taxil," who at length has revealed the mystery. Diana Vaughan is the name used by Taxil's typewriter, who signed anything he chose to dictate. Taxil has certainly played the devil with the Catholics. His pretended conversion and exposures of Freemasonry brought him plaudits from priests and bishops. Then he flew at higher game. After putting out a book on *Sister Masons*, he made out that Charleston (longitude 33) was the seat of Palladism and devil-worship, of which an awful account was given by Dr. Bataille, a pseudonym of M. Hack, and gave to the world an account of the conversion of Diana Vaughan in *Memoires d'une ex-Palladiste*.

Diana was patronized, though she had never been seen, by Cardinal Parocchi, and even by the Pope, who sent her

the Papal Benediction, and assured her that her conversion was a most magnificent triumph of grace. A triduum, or three days' prayer, was celebrated at the Sacré Cœur for her, and her hymn to Joan of Arc, a borrowed affair, was sung in several churches. The Bishop of Charleston, who doubted her existence, was cold-shouldered by the Pope; and the vicar-apostolic of Gibraltar, who informed the Vatican that there were no caverns in the rocks where crowns for devils were manufactured, was not listened to.

Cardinal Vaughan lent his paper (the *Tablet*) to a discussion of the question. Father Wyndham, and other priests, zealously defended the *bona fides* of Diana, and denounced the Freemasons as belonging to a secret society, the real aim of which was to substitute devil-worship for the Catholic faith; and the exposures by C. C. Massey and A. Waite were pooh-poohed.

At the last feast of SS. Michael and All Angels a grand Anti-Masonic Catholic Congress was held at Trent, and here some German priests gave vent to their suspicions that Diana was a myth. The Archbishop of Grenoble defended her genuineness, and a committee was appointed to examine the question and report. Leo Taxil, after much trouble, was induced to promise that she should positively appear on April 19.

In the New York *Journal*, of March 22 last, appeared a portrait of Diana Vaughan, with the star and sash of her order, and the announcement that Jean Charpentier had gone to Paris to see her in the flesh and bring her to the States. It said: "She is to lecture in Paris next month, and in May will sail for New York. Charpentier says his purpose in bringing Diana Vaughan here is to show people that, while supernatural manifestations inspired by the Devil constantly occur, they are not divine, as is claimed by the Luciferians, but the works of demons. Charpentier is now said to be a devout Roman Catholic." Little wonder the Catholics are now excited against Taxil. They hooted and threatened him at the meeting, but he was protected by a large body of police.

If "Leo Taxil" thought to win back favor from Freethinkers and anti-clericals, he has been vastly mistaken. The *Intransigent* expresses its contempt for his buffoonery. Jogand Pagés has long been known to French Freethinkers. A love of deception, notoriety, and money has ruled his career. We should have preferred him to remain a Catholic.

A correspondent of the *Daily News* states that the visions ascribed to Daniel, which are now pressed into the service of the Greek question, were a century ago relied on as foretelling the legislative independence of Ireland. In 1799 an eccentric lawyer, named Francis Dobbs, who was member for Charlemont, in the Irish Parliament, opposed the Union in a speech in which he contended from the book of Daniel that, by amalgamating Ireland with England, it would run counter to the whole scheme of prophecy. Ireland, he said, never having formed a part of the Roman Empire, could not be absorbed in one of the ten kingdoms typified in the image of Daniel.

One of the monks in the Trappist Monastery at Grenoble attempted to assassinate the Prior by striking him on the head with a large stone. The assassin was immediately placed under arrest. He was under the belief, or delusion, that he was being persecuted. The silent system of this religious order is well calculated to develop insanity.

The Rev. William Goodrich, a Kansas Baptist preacher, has been much criticized for putting into actual practice the teachings of his Savior on the subject of sex. He declared that he "could do better work for God and humanity" if unsexed, and submitted voluntarily to the surgeon.

Instead of joining the Christians in crying "Fie" on the Rev. William Goodrich, we think his example might save many curates, clergy, and spiritual comforters from getting and bringing others into trouble. Christ said: "There be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matthew xix. 12). Some have said that by "the kingdom of heaven," as by the Buddhist Nirvana, only serenity of mind is meant. But who among our ministers are prepared, even for this, to make such a sacrifice as the Rev. William Goodrich?

The only true followers of the unmarried Christ in this matter, save rare examples like Origen and Goodrich, are the Skoptski of Russia, among whom, as with the ancient sect of Valesians, no one is admitted until he has submitted to the supreme seal of consecration to Christ. The Skoptski accept literally the saying, "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed rather than, having

two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire" (Matthew xviii. 8). The females, too, are fond of citing, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck" (Luke xxiii. 29).

It is a curious instance of the power of fanaticism that the Skoptski, instead of becoming extinct, find continual recruits, even, it is said, among some of the well-to-do classes in Russia. They claim to be the most consistent interpreters of Christ, and that the teachings of Tolstoi should lead to their practice.

A pious burglar has just passed through the Edinburgh Police-court. He has been committed over fifty times for house-breaking, and has spent no less than twenty-seven years in prison. But he boasted to the magistrate that "he had never broken the Lord's Day."

This reminds us of an American story. A Scotchman, on a first visit to the land of the Stars and Stripes, eagerly inquired whether his countrymen over there kept the Sabbath. "Keep the Sabbath?" said the Yankee he asked; "why yes, and anything else they can lay their hands on."

But to return to our pious burglar. When remanded, he asked that he might be sent to the Calton Gaol, instead of the police-cells, in order that he might enjoy the religious services there; and when he was taken back he actually complained of "innovations," quite in the best style of a true-blue Presbyterian scenting heresy in Ian Maclaren.

By the way, a formal complaint has been lodged against Ian Maclaren, not for his novels published under that name, but for a religious volume on *The Mind of the Master*, published under the more prosaic name of John Watson. We do not suppose, however, that he will be hunted out of the Presbyterian Church. Perhaps he will be slightly censured, and take it lying down; for the churches of to-day don't breed martyrs; witness the conduct of that poor creature, the Rev. J. Robinson, of Kilmun.

At Paisley, says a *Times* leader, there is a Baptist Cathedral with a surpliced choir—of both sexes; and in a Glasgow Congregational church a liturgy is used, with choral responses, while over the communion table stands a large gilt cross. The *Times* writer thinks that English Nonconformity is "feeling its way" towards a rivalry with the State Church in "ceremonial elaboration."

The newspapers gravely report that Miss "Brigadier" Swift has left the Salvation Army in America, and joined the Roman Catholic Church. We do not suppose that this will shorten the life of "General" Booth, or prolong that of the Pope. These little shuffles from one Christian sect to another are always going on. When the Roman Catholic Church catches a new man it may well chuckle and boast, but there is no occasion for fuss over its acquisition of Miss Swift or Miss Slow.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells has sent invitations to over one hundred bishops to meet at Glastonbury on August 3, with the object of drawing attention to the existence of the British Church in these islands before the arrival of St. Augustine and his companions, and to the connection of the Church of England with that Church, and, through it, with some of the earliest efforts to spread the Gospel in the West. If these bishops only looked into the matter, they might find that the early British Church is purely legendary, and founded on no better tradition than that which says that Joseph of Arimathea was the founder of Glastonbury.

According to the *Congregationalist*, recent "rationalistic statements of President Jordan, of Leland Stanford, Jr., University, and Professor Howison, of the University of California, are giving much concern to the evangelical Christians of California, who are desirous of strong denominational colleges." Exactly so, says the *New York Jewish Messenger*; the sciences, history, and philosophy must be taught from the standpoint, not of science, history, and philosophy, but from that of the Church.

The *Athenæum* (April 24), noticing Maspero's *Struggle of the Nations—Egypt, Syria, and Assyria*, published by the S. P. C. K., says: "What everyone must complain of are the unwarranted alterations in M. Maspero's narratives and notes—alterations which we are disposed to attribute, not to want of skill on the part of the translator, but to some meddler whose intention has been to correct the author's heterodoxy." It gives many cases where the translation "makes M. Maspero to say what he never said, and to minimize, alter, and do away with many of his own settled opinions."

We may give a single instance. Maspero says: "Most critics admit that Melchisedek is unhistorical"—*n'a rien d'historique*. The book says: "Many critics have questioned the historical existence of Melchisedek."

The *Athenæum* goes on to explode Mr. Sayce's theory about the names in Genesis xiv. being found on Babylonian tablets, which has recently been enlarged upon by a writer in the *Echo*. It is on two fragments of the Persian period, about 300 B.C., that is found a name which cannot be read, a name which may be transcribed as Tu-ud Khul-a, and a name (broken) which Mr. Pinches identifies with a name read in Accadian as Eriaku, or Erimaku, and in Semitic as Arad-Sin, or Rim-Sin. And the Rev. A. Sayce jumps at and proclaims the conclusion that here we have the contemporaries of Abraham, Chedorlaomer, Tidal, and Arioch. The conjecture looks far-fetched on the face of it.

The latest Blue Book on Crete shows that Moslems and Christians are pretty well matched in mutual hatred and malignity. Seventy-five churches and convents were totally desecrated and partly destroyed by the Mussulmans in one district; on the other hand, the number of mosques partly or totally destroyed in four districts was ninety-two.

The Moslems seem rather the worse in desecrating cemeteries. Some of the leading Mussulmans had the grace to express extreme regret for, and disapprobation of, these excesses of their co-religionists, and to beg the Mutessauf to make a severe inquiry and inflict exemplary punishment. At the same time, they mentioned "identical profanations committed by Christians." This led to an inquiry, and Mr. Vice-Consul Calocherino telegraphed the result in these terms: "I ascertain that Christians burnt, last August, at Humari, Monofatsi, the tabour, or wooden coffin, of Hadji Baba; they took away another at Laonta, broke grave stones at Cacu; no tombs opened. It is confirmed that at Meskinia the Mussulmans opened eighteen tombs, desecrated church, profaned pictures."

Rev. A. B. Simpson takes a gloomy view of our Christian civilization. Notwithstanding the fact that we have missionaries in all lands, he says: "I speak with authority when I say that I am convinced the world is wicked than ever. As civilization advances, sin spreads. Civilized nations are wicked than the uncivilized. New York and San Francisco are more sinful than Peking and Singapore. I speak from personal observation, for I have been in all four cities." This ought to convince a reasonable person that Christianity is a fraud. Why does Mr. Simpson go on and preach a religion that shows such discouraging results?—*Independent Pulpit*.

The Wesleyan Conference assembled at Melbourne snorted fiercely at "General" Booth because of his proposed invasion of Fiji and the other Pacific Islands, and suspects the Army man of meditating a poaching expedition among their spiritual preserves. The Rev. Dickford pointed out that to all intents and purposes the Wesleyan missions own Fiji. "Ninety per cent. of the people are found every Lord's Day in our churches," "We have 3,800 paid workers there," etc. Booth will, no doubt, reason that the island which will support 3,800 professional sin-shifters will support anything. The Army will wade in, band and all, and Fiji will have to pay the piper, also the drummer. Evidently the Wesleyan Conference believes that, when a sect has got any particular savage by the wool, old England should grant it a monopoly of that savage to the bitter end. The Fijian, it seems, has become very industrious under Wesleyan rule. The *Bulletin* is sorry for him; once he lived in beautiful idleness in an Eden of his own, and now he has to work like a fiend to keep a lot of holy foreigners, who offer in return their Eden, which, happily, they don't want themselves.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

"We unhesitatingly answer that the Christianity presented to the African has been a curse rather than a blessing to him," says the *Lagos (West Africa) Record*. "This Christianity is not of the New Testament description, but is an elaborate fabrication of unintelligible doctrines and creeds, fashioned with multifarious schisms and rituals, and the whole aim and object of which is venal. Such Christianity, so-called, possesses neither moral nor spiritual germ, and its effect cannot be otherwise than abortive and harmful."

The *New York Evening Post* says: "The tabulated statement of the receipts of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, for the first half of the present fiscal year, shows a total of \$243,817.05—a decrease of \$34,283.58 as compared with the receipts of the corresponding six months of last year."

Rabbi Gottheil, of New York, recently delivered a discourse criticizing Ethical Culture and Agnosticism, as expounded by Felix Adler. "Positive, clear Atheism," he said, "is far preferable to Agnosticism, as the latter lacks the courage to say either yes or no, and blows hot and cold with the same breath. Atheism is certainly more consoling than the theory which leaves man to the torture of a never-ending doubt."

Parson Alexander, of North Melbourne, who announced publicly that the son of a Jewish Rabbi had been converted, and was going to be baptized as a Presbyterian, has got a bad set back. His converted Jew writes to the papers stating that he isn't going to be baptized as a Presbyterian, and thereby creates a painful impression that somebody connected with the story must have been drinking. Considering that this Jew, if he had come along, would have been almost the only reliable Hebrew convert on record, the fact that he isn't coming is doubly painful. Converted Jews are about as rare as are icebergs at Cooktown.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

The Rev. Mr. Engström, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, is, we believe, Rector of St. Mildred's, Bread-street, which, says the Rev. H. Clarke, had an average attendance of one at the morning service, which was the only service on Sundays. The church was always closed during the week. It is now permanently closed; but the rector's income of £303 is still paid. Mr. Engström is also Barnard Hyde's Lecturer at St. Mary-at-Hill, at £40 a year. He resides at Croydon.

St. George's, Botolph-lane, has been closed since 1891, but the rector still receives over £600 a year, and the parish officers are also in receipt of their salaries. St. Alphage, London-wall, with an income of £925, has an average attendance of four in the morning and six in the evening. All Halls, Lombard-street, averages nineteen in the morning and twenty-six in the evening, the income being £1,085.

Mr. Price Hughes is down upon the gentlemen who write in the *Times*. One of them incidentally referred to the Greeks as "agreeing with Job that it is not well to serve the Lord for naught," whereupon Mr. Hughes accuses him (half rightly) of putting into the mouth of Job the language of Satan. The blunder, however, is not of much importance to the ordinarily constituted mind. But the mind of Mr. Hughes does not belong to such a commonplace category; so he denounces the gentlemen who write in the *Times* as well up in Plato and Horace, while "of Christianity and its inspired Book they do not know the most superficial and elementary facts." Most of the *Times* writers will probably smile at that "inspired Book" nonsense. They are too well educated to read it, like Mr. Price Hughes.

There is a Home for Cats at Hampstead, apparently kept by Mrs. Williams, who gives some dreadful cases of ill-treatment of these harmless, necessary animals, who are sometimes shut up in empty houses to die of starvation, and sometimes turned adrift to meet any fate when families remove from one house to another. One cat was tied to the kitchen dresser in an empty house, and was raving mad when found, and had to be killed by a policeman with a staff. Such treatment of helpless animals is unspeakably cruel and cowardly. Yet we daresay the culprits all think themselves very good Christians—and perhaps they are.

Eliza Frances Benham, the Wandsworth servant who committed suicide when afflicted with monomania, said she was going to see God the Father, and left a letter: "Trust in our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I shall see you in glory." The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide while of unsound mind."

Mrs. Amelia Farrell, of New York, has been put into an asylum because she deemed herself called to desert her husband and children in order "to save souls." Christ said his disciples were to leave all to follow him; but the saying is not supposed to apply to married women with families.

A colored man, named Jonah Crosby, was praying in a church in Tirzah, S.C., the other evening, with a big revolver in his pocket. The position of the weapon made him uncomfortable, and in moving it the arm exploded, wounding him seriously, and stampeding the congregation.—*Truthseeker*.

Who killed Christ? It was wicked Unitarians, says the Rev. A. C. Dixon. "These high priests who wagged their heads were all of them Unitarians. The man who passed sentence on Christ was a Unitarian. These men said: 'This is not god; this is a man. We'll kill him because he said he was God. We'll bring all the force of our religion to bear upon him that we may kill him, because he said he was God.' Thus did religion, under the garb of worshipping one God, kill our Lord." No doubt the Unitarians will take it to heart.

The writer of "The Red Page" in the *Sydney Bulletin* says: "'Body,' 'soul,' 'spirit,' are merely labels of different manifestations of the Ego. 'Body' is a well-understood term legitimately applied. 'Soul' is a confusion-breeding myth. 'Spirit' is little better. All that there is of conscious life in any individual resides in the brain and attached nervous systems.

"Soul" is one of the words which, on O. W. Holmes's plan, need 'depolarizing.' But it is so clustered with false ideas, handed down from less enlightened days, that attempts at depolarization are hopeless. Its use should be restricted to poetry and fiction, and to religion, which is a mixture of poetry and fiction; when dealing with facts in unimaginative prose it should be eliminated altogether.

"There is a sense, of course, in which poetical allusions, such as—

John Brown's body lies moldering in the grave,  
But his soul goes marching on—

are scientifically correct. When John was in the flesh his sayings and doings, and the sayings and doings concerning him, impressed the brain-cells of many persons in a certain definite way. When Brown ceased to be in the flesh those impressions remained as permanent sources of thought and action.

"If the soul can be dispensed with, some of the toughest theological problems will disappear along with it, and the energy hitherto devoted to their solution may be otherwise applied. Thus it has always been a moot question where the soul came from, how it got into the body, and where it was located. The antagonism of conflicting views has at times been productive of dissatisfaction, and there should need no demonstration of the advantage of substituting for a soul of uncertain genesis a brain whose development can be watched *ab initio* under the microscope."

A vital education question is being fought by the Freethinkers in Kansas. Mr. Fram, a Liberal (American for Freethinker), sent his boy to a public school, and told him not to take part in Bible-reading or any religious exercises. The boy did as his father directed, and was expelled. Mr. Fram brought an action in the District Court, and gained a victory; but the trustees have carried the case to the Appellate Court, where it will be finally decided. Mr. A. L. Herr, a Liberal Attorney, is conducting the case for Mr. Fram gratuitously, and the unavoidable expenses are being raised by subscription.

The Roman Catholics do not mean to be left out of the Jubilee celebration. It is announced that during the Queen's progress from St. Paul's an address on behalf of the Roman Catholics of England will be presented to her outside St. George's Cathedral by Cardinal Vaughan and the Duke of Norfolk.

Mr. Plummer, of Oxford, an authority on early Irish and Scandinavian history, says that the myth of St. Patrick has evolved from a misunderstood word. "*Qui et patricius fuit*," wrote the Venerable Bede, of *Atius*, who had been made a patrician. Some one put a capital P to "*patricius*," and the rest was invented bit by bit by the monkish chroniclers.

The vicar of Gosberton is at loggerheads with the trustees of a local charity school. The reverend gentleman has nominated himself as master, and notified the trustees that they must hand over to him the proceeds of the charity, which they refuse to do. The vicar arranged for a magic lantern service in the school, and the trustees arranged for two other meetings the same evening. They were all held together, and it must have been something like the first Feast of Pentecost.

### Morality.

Morality may be defined as the law of mutual respect for the general and private equal rights of men, for the purpose of securing general human happiness. Everything that injures or undermines this happiness and this respect is evil; everything that advances them is good. In accordance with this definition, evil consists only in degeneracy or the encroachment of human and private egotism upon this general happiness and the interests of the fellow-man. What is beneficial to the community or to the fellow-man is in general good; and the notion of good becomes converted into its opposite only by the individual improperly placing the notion of that which is beneficial or advantageous to himself above the notion of that which is beneficial to the community, or to another person of equal rights with himself. The greatest sinners, therefore, are egotists, or those who place their own I higher than the interests and the laws of the common weal, and endeavor to satisfy it at the cost and to the injury of those possessing equal rights. This egotism in itself is indeed not objectionable, and really forms the final and highest spring of all our actions, whether good or bad. Moreover, we shall never be able to get rid of the egotism of human nature; and, therefore, all that we have to do is to turn it into the right path, or to render it rational and humane, by seeking to bring its satisfaction into accordance with the good of all, and with the interest of the community.—*Dr. Ludwig Buchner*.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

May 9 and 16, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

MR. C. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—May 2, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road.—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 Eufra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

MR. GOTT, of Bradford, is an enterprising tradesman, who aims at doing a good and creditable business among Freethinkers. We hear on all sides that he gives satisfaction to his customers. We advise our readers to notice his current advertisement on our back page.

A. B. MOSS.—Good. See "Sugar Plums."

T. MARTIN (Pontypridd).—You naturally find many difficulties in such a place; but keep pegging away. No doubt you will be able to have some meetings under the Lecture Scheme. Unfortunately, the fund is very limited, the available lecturers are very few, and one district cannot be visited frequently.

J. REID (Motherwell).—Mr. Foote has written you by post, as desired, as you appeared to be in a hurry; but he takes this opportunity of repeating that he neither issues nor accepts challenges. It is doubtful whether you will do much good by noticing the scurrilous Christian Evidence lecturer you mention. We warned Secularists against advertising the fellow Powell, but many of them would give him a bastard notoriety.

W. TIPPER.—The volumes might be worth three shillings; not more, we believe.

THOMAS MACLEISH.—Shall be pleased to see the annual report. Very glad to hear that the Glasgow Branch has had one of the most successful winter seasons in its history.

W. R. ROLLEY.—We have taken the text as the motto for our leading article this week.

H. GUTHRIE.—Thanks for the trouble you have taken. We will make use of the extracts in our next issue.

H. A. ROGERS.—Such clerical cadging letters fly about in flocks. We have nothing to give Father Abraham, and don't suppose our readers have.

G. M. BLYTHE.—We must agree to differ.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.—Many thanks for the reference.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—We have not seen Dr. Parker's lucubrations on the Eastern question. We have sympathy with the Greeks, but our judgment is against them. They have made a pretty mess of it, as we foretold; and others will have to get them out of the trouble.

G. BRADY, sending a further subscription to the Lecture Scheme, says: "I trust it will not be allowed to fall through for want of the needful, and I shall be glad to contribute ten shillings monthly all this year towards it."

ESS JAY BEE.—Received with thanks. Shall appear.

M. E. PEGG.—Your letter was the first intimation we had of Dr. Guest's death. We had not seen him for some years, but we knew him intimately many years ago, and held him in the highest esteem. He possessed intelligence, integrity, and good humor.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—G. Brady, 10s.; W. Tipper, 2s.; F. W. Allen, 1s.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Paisley Branch, 2s. 6d.; Blackburn Branch, 7s.; Chatham Branch, 10s. 4d.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Paisley Branch, 2s. 6d.; Blackburn Branch, 7s.; Chatham Branch, 9s. 8d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Islington Gazette—Torch of Reason—Boston Investigator—Unigraphy—People's Newspaper—Literary Guide—Truthseeker—Humanity—Crescent—Isle of Man Times—South London Press—Two Worlds—English Mechanic—South London Observer—Progressive Thinker—Northern Daily Telegraph—Watford Observer—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Vegetarian—Wellingborough News.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.**

MR. FOOTE delivered three lectures at Birmingham on Sunday, in the large room (really a good hall) of the Bristol-street Board school, which has been used during the winter by the Sunday Society. The meetings were the largest that have attended to hear Freethought lectures in Birmingham for many years, and the Branch is delighted with the day's work. In the evening all the standing-room was occupied, as well as the seating accommodation. The large number of strangers present was evidenced by the surprising sale of literature at the bookstall. A good supply of the *Freethinker* was sold out, and more were in demand. The Birmingham Branch will continue to hold Sunday meetings in the same room.

Before leaving Birmingham, Mr. Foote paid a visit to Mr. Daniel Baker, a veteran friend of the Secular movement, and the oldest of the N. S. S. vice-presidents after Mr. True-love. Mr. Baker is, unfortunately, confined to his bed, and is rather feeble in body; but his mind is clear and bright, and he contemplates his end with philosophical serenity. We hope, however, that the end is not so near as affection may well apprehend, but that the approach of fine weather will restore him to at least a mild enjoyment of life. In any case, we are confident that Mr. Baker has the sympathy and good wishes of hundreds of Freethinkers in all parts of the country. Secularism has never had a more staunch and intelligent supporter. Mr. Baker has not only shed lustre on the cause in Birmingham, he has liberally contributed towards its maintenance as a national movement.

Next Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, May 4 and 5, a public debate between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee will take place in the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell. The subject for discussion is "The Existence of God, or the Rival Merits of Theism and Atheism." Mr. Charles Watts will take the chair one evening, and a representative Christian on the other. Freethinkers should make the debate known as widely as possible among their more orthodox friends and acquaintances. Mr. Lee is the best debater the Christians have at present on their platform.

Last Sunday evening, at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, Mr. Charles Watts's lecture on "The Sequel of the Cross" was listened to with great attention by a very appreciative audience. Mr. Watts propounded the theory that Christ did not die on the cross. At the conclusion of the lecture many interesting questions were asked, and several friends expressed a wish that the substance of the lecture should be published in the *Freethinker*. Mr. Watts will, therefore, deal with the subject in our next issue. Mr. Heaford presided, and made an earnest appeal to Freethinkers to join the National Secular Society.

Mr. Watts lectures again this evening, Sunday, May 2, at the Athenæum Hall, taking for his subject "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb." This will be an entirely new lecture, in which the interesting events of birth, marriage, and death will be treated from a Secular standpoint.

Mr. C. Cohen, who is now in London, lectures to-day (May 2) at the Camberwell Secular Hall, in the evening, prior to which he delivers two open-air lectures, in the morning at Station-road, and in the afternoon at Peckham Rye—all under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. Mr. Cohen is sure to have good meetings.

Last Sunday Mr. Harry Snell opened a four-weeks' crusade in South Shields. A splendid meeting was held in the morning in the open air, Market-place, when no less than three opponents came forward to defend "The Foundations of the Bible." The discussion was quite good-tempered, and the lecturer made a most favorable impression. The evening meeting was held indoors, and was very well attended.

A Grand Concert was given in the Secular Hall, New Brompton, on Sunday evening. The songs and musical selections were much appreciated. The Churches are moving slowly in this direction.

The annual general meeting of the Glasgow Branch takes place in the hall, at 110 Brunswick-street, on Sunday, May 2, at 12 noon. The business to be placed before the members being of the utmost importance, the committee desire that every member will make a special effort to be present. The session will be closed with a social meeting at 6.30. Tickets, 6d. each, may be had from Mr. D. G. Lindsay, Ingram-street.

The Leeds Branch is arranging a Sunday excursion to

Morecambe at an early date. Members and friends desirous of going should at once give their names to the secretary.

On Sunday, May 9, Mr. Chilperic Edwards and Mr. J. M. Wheeler will be pleased to escort any friends who desire to visit the British Museum in their company. The time of meeting will be at 3 p.m., and the Nimroud and Nineveh Galleries will first be visited.

The veteran *Boston Investigator* has now entered on its sixty-seventh year. The fact that a Freethought paper, which has so many difficulties to encounter from combined bigotry and hypocrisy, should last so long says much for its serving a real and important purpose. Mrs. Stanton is now continuing her "Woman's Bible" in its pages, to which Mrs. Gage, author of *Woman, Church, and State*, contributes. We wish our contemporary all prosperity, as well as length of life.

At the Easter meeting of the Camberwell Vestry Mr. A. B. Moss was nominated as churchwarden. This gave him an opportunity of speaking his mind on the Church as "an institution which fosters practices and beliefs that are either effete, barbarous, or ridiculous." Mr. Moss's speech made a sensation, and is reported and commented upon in the *South London Press*, and by the *Camberwell and Peckham Times*.

The veteran George Julian Harney reviews in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* the Humanitarian League's volume entitled *The New Charter: A Discussion of the Rights of Men and the Rights of Animals*; the contributors to which are Mr. J. C. Kenworthy, the Rev. A. L. Lilley, Mr. Josiah Oldfield, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. G. W. Foote, and Mr. C. W. Leadbeater. This is what Mr. Harney says of the Secularist view, by the President of the National Secular Society: "Perhaps, of all these able addresses, the most practically useful is that of Mr. G. W. Foote—and perhaps I am led to say this because, as a whole, it best represents my 'view.' Those who know the name of Mr. Foote only as the so-called 'ribald assailant of religion' will be likely to form quite another estimate of the man after perusal of his address. The clear argument, the cogent reasoning, the indignant denunciation of wanton cruelty, the persuasive pleading for justice to all sentient and suffering beings, and therewith the marked repudiation of all fads and mere sentimentalism, make Mr. Foote's paper of remarkable value."

Mr. Foote's scheme for incorporating a society which shall receive, hold, and use subscriptions, donations, and bequests for Secular purposes, is completed to the very last syllable; and, by the time this number of the *Freethinker* is in general circulation, it will be deposited at Somerset House for registration. When the certificate of registration is obtained, the Memorandum and Articles of Association will be printed and distributed.

The incubation of this scheme has cost Mr. Foote a great deal of time and thought, and no little expense; but counsel's opinion has been given in writing that the scheme as drafted is *safe*, and that is, in itself, a triumph.

Next week we shall have something to say about an offer made by a generous friend of the movement to put down a considerable sum of money, under this scheme of incorporation, for the purpose of assisting to build suitable headquarters in London. This gentleman's offer, although a handsome one, is not sufficient in itself, but it will probably stimulate the generosity of others.

The *Yarmouth Independent* (April 17) has a good article on "Sermons in Stones," by N. M. X., in which the contradictions between the teachings of the Bible and geology are distinctly pointed out.

Branches of the National Secular Society, all over the country, should be preparing for the Annual Conference, which will be held on Whit-Sunday in the Secular Hall, Leicester. We believe that important business will be on the Agenda for discussion, and that there is likely to be a large attendance.

The theory of evolution having conquered the intelligence of the whole of the civilized world, even theologians have no longer the hardihood to deny its truth; and, the old weapon of persecution no longer lying ready to their hand, they have adopted the new method of stealing their opponent's thunder. We are now informed, in all gravity, that, so far from Darwinism and the Bible being antagonistic, they are really one in principle; that, so far from evolution being an irreligious invention, it has really been "God's method in creation"; and the old farce of what Mill called "suborning evidence in favor of a First Cause" has gone on apace.—H. M. Cecil, "*Pseudo-Philosophy*."

## DUTIES OF FREETHINKERS.

THE disciples of Secularism should learn to value the right of Freethought as the palladium of their faith, as the basis of all other blessings—moral and material, as well as intellectual. They should learn to revere the memory of the martyrs of their faith, and recognize the importance of their services to the cause of modern civilization and its sacred principles; but they should also learn to recognize the magnitude of the remaining task. It is no trifle that the prevalent system of ethics and the temporal and eternal hopes of millions of our brethren are still based on a lie. It is no trifle that the health and happiness of millions of our fellow-men are still sacrificed on the altar of that untruth by the suppression of public recreations on the only day when a large plurality of our working men find their only chance of leisure. It is no trifle that honest men are still branded as "infidels," "renegades," and "scoffers," for refusing to kneel in the temple of a nature-hating fanatic. The struggle against the spirits of darkness is by no means yet decided in Italy, where the arch-hierarchy is spinning restless intrigues to regain the power which for ages made Europe a Gehenna of misery and despotism. Nor in Spain, where a swarm of clerical vampires is still sucking the life-blood of an impoverished nation. Nor in Austria and southern Germany, where the alliance of Church and State remains a constant menace to the scant liberties of the people.

Freethinkers need not underrate the influence of individual efforts to recognize the superior advantage of organized co-operation, so urgently needed for the reform of Sabbath laws, of press laws, and the educational system of the numerous colleges still entrusted to the control of the Jesuitical enemies of science. The strength-in-union principle should encourage the oft-debated projects for the establishment of Freethought colleges (as well as Freethought communities); but still more decisive results could be hoped from that union of the powers of knowledge and of moral courage which has never yet failed to ensure the triumph of social reforms. We should cease to plead for favors where we can claim an indisputable right. We should cease to admit the right of mental prostitutes to enforce the penalties of social ostracism against the champions of science; but we, in our turn, should deserve the prestige of that championship by scorning the expedients of the moral cowardice which strains at gnats and connives at beams, attacking superstition in the harmless absurdities of its ceremonial institutions, and sparing the ruinous dogmas that have drenched the face of the earth with the blood of her noblest children, and turned vast areas of garden-land into hopeless deserts. The sceptics who scoff at the inconsistencies of a poor clergyman, who tries in vain to reconcile the instincts of his better nature with the demands of an anti-natural creed, should themselves be consistent enough to repudiate the worship of the fatal founder of that creed, and not let the hoary age of the Galilean doctrine palliate the tendencies of its life-blighting delusions.

FELIX L. OSWALD.

## Mere Negation.

Of all devices for making the attitude of the professional scholar and preacher appear questionable or contemptible, the most threadbare and absurd is the dubbing of this attitude as an attitude of "mere negation." "Words often repeated," said Goethe, "ossify the organs of intelligence." Few words of theological parlance have been oftener repeated than "mere negation," and the resulting ossification of clerical intelligence has been immense. Taken as a whole, the achievement of the higher criticism has been positive and constructive in an eminent degree. As Whittier sang: "The waster builds again." Destruction and disintegration there have been, no doubt. There always are when there is building going on; the iron for the building twenty stories high is mined, the stone for it is quarried, the wood for it is cut down—and all these processes are destructive. But the completed building is no "mere negation."—John Chadwick.

MR. S. PIERSON, one of the earliest members of the Chatham Secular Society, was buried in the Chatham Cemetery, on Saturday afternoon, the 18th ult. The Secular Burial Service was conducted by Mr. W. B. Thompson; Mr. F. J. Boorman and Mr. J. J. Taylor spoke a few words at the grave. The deceased member was seventy years of age, staunch and true to his principles.—F. J. BOORMAN.

## TRUST IN GOD.

A FEW weeks ago a poor immigrant from Europe landed at Boston. He waited around the office, but nobody came to meet him. Finally, the immigrant inspector addressed him and inquired where he wished to go. He replied that he wanted to find his brother.

"Where does your brother live?" inquired the inspector.

"He lives in America," said the immigrant.

"But haven't you any more definite direction than that?"

"No," he said; "my brother left home to come to America three or four years ago, and I thought I had better come and join him here."

"But how do you expect to find him if you don't know where he lives?" said the officer.

"Well," said the immigrant, "he lives in America, and I trust in God; he will help me to find him." And the inspector called a policeman, and had the poor fellow arrested and locked up, charged with being insane.

It has come to this, that to trust in God is conclusive evidence of insanity in cultured Boston, where every Sunday a thousand preachers and Sunday-school teachers are still at work trying to impress upon the tender minds of children and childish grown people the gospel doctrine of trust in God, and perfect faith in his help in all our difficulties. Do they believe it? No. You might go through the streets of Boston, or, for that matter, of any other town in the United States where common schools have been established for twenty years, and ask every parson you meet if he has such trust in God, or any faith in receiving assistance from him, under such circumstances as this poor immigrant found himself in, and he will, if he speaks the truth, answer, No. But no doubt many Christians would be met who would feel it to be a conscientious duty, like St. Paul, to lie so that "the grace of God might abound," and these would declare that they had perfect trust in God and in all his promises, as set forth in the Bible; though every act of their lives would contradict their declaration. Not one of them, when he was sick, but would send for a doctor, instead of calling for the elders of the church to pray over him and put their hands upon him, trusting to be made well. Not one of them would dare to swallow a dose of strychnine, or any other deadly poison, nor pick up a diamond-back rattlesnake, trusting in the promise of God that it would not hurt him.

The Christian scientists, so-called, profess to trust in God and his methods for the cure of disease; but this is only when the patient is a friend or relation. They are like Artemus Ward, who declared that the great rebellion must be put down, and, rather than it should not be, he was willing to sacrifice all his wife's relatives. But he drew the line at that—he didn't sacrifice himself; and I suspect the Christian scientists prefer a scientific physician when they have a tape-worm themselves. I know there are exceptions, as in the case of idiots and insane persons; but up in the New England States the man or woman who trusts in God, and lets his or her child die without calling in a physician, is likely to be called upon to answer to an indictment for murder; and in such cases the only plea that can save his or her neck is that of insanity. Courts, juries, and the public generally would conclude, as in the case of the poor immigrant alluded to, that trust in God, in such cases, is evidence of insanity or idiocy.

There was a time, some four hundred years ago, when civilization was at its lowest ebb, and people were pious and ignorant; when they believed the Bible and all that the priests told them; then they had a genuine trust in God and a faith in the priests. That they have no such trust and faith now is due to the growth of knowledge, and the consequent advance of civilization. Every step in the progress of civilization is marked by a decline of piety and a loss of faith and trust in God. Preachers are fond of arguing that because Christianity still lingers, in name, in civilized countries, Christianity produced or caused the civilization; but while they argue this they are constantly lamenting the decline of faith and the decay of the vital piety of good old times of our ancestors, when belief was universal, and such trust in God as the poor immigrant displayed was not ridiculed or considered evidence of insanity.

Religion is based upon faith; civilization upon knowledge. Knowledge is the antithesis of faith, and therefore civilization is the antithesis of religion. As well talk of darkness being the cause of light, or rain on the grass

promoting prairie fires, as that Christianity is the cause of civilization.

What are the causes that have promoted civilization? First, the discovery of the rotundity of the earth; that the earth was not the largest and principal body of the universe, to light up which all the rest of the millions of suns and planets were manufactured by the hand of God. Second, the sciences of astronomy, geology, anthropology, physiology, and all the kindred sciences that have grown out of, and are connected with, these. Third, evolution, the development of all animated nature from the protoplasmic, simple cell, up through all the various forms of vegetable and animal life, to man, the crowning result of the series, and the brother, or blood relation, of all the rest. And, finally, printing, which has made all this knowledge available to the whole population of Europe and America.

Nobody can deny that these discoveries and the knowledge resulting from them are the basis, the cause, of the civilization of Europe and America. If we want to know what part Christianity took in this civilizing process, we have only to go to history and find that every step in these sciences—this rapidly accumulating knowledge—was antagonized by Christian churches and priests, by every means in their power, from burning at the stake, imprisonment, torture, excommunication, down to lying, slander, and social ostracism; that every one of these new discoveries was contrary to the express word of God, and to the teaching of all the prophets and apostles that he had sent to instruct us.

What do they mean when they tell us that Christianity has caused civilization? Do they believe in a just God who will punish false teachers? Or do they trust in him that he will overlook lying, when the lie is intended to make his grace abound?

But Christianity, that Christianity that prevailed four hundred years ago, is dead. Civilization has killed it. That religion that priests taught and men believed, Christianity that trusted in God and his Bible promises, has gone, and in its place has grown up a reliance upon rational thought instead of faith, which survives in name only. Its creed has been emasculated and its character changed. Its hell for unbelievers has been abolished, and little unbaptized babies no longer are broiled on the devil's hot gridiron. Sinners are to be as happy as their nature will permit, and heaven is but a condition, not a locality.

All the golden crowns and golden pavements have been melted down and coined to supply the circulating medium of the gold bugs. God himself is no longer a personality, a big Indian, watching for Infidels who proclaim their unbelief in his existence, and killing them on the spot. He is now only a "being without body, parts, or passions"—if anybody can form any conjecture as to what such a being can be; an unknown something that caused everything to exist when it first begun to exist—if anybody can think of a time when nothing existed.

Once in a while a simple fellow comes along, like a survival from the Dark Ages, or a fossil of old forgotten times, who, like the Boston immigrant, has come three thousand miles across the ocean to find a long-lost brother who lives in America, full of blind trust in God—that he who takes an interest in the fall of sparrows will find his brother for him; and all the funny papers publish his story as the best joke of the season; and a United States official, posted upon history, and recalling what men, with such a faith as that, used to do four hundred years ago, when a weekly *auto da fé* was the chief amusement of such people, cautiously concludes that it is not safe for such a character to go at large, and has him locked up as a lunatic.

Now, if we want to know which has done the most to promote civilization, Christianity or Rationalism, compare these two men—the inspector and the immigrant. One has no trust in God or belief in his promises, and the other is a good specimen of the Christian who displays all the simple faith and trust that preachers are so fond of extolling as all that is necessary in this vale of tears, and the one thing needful to entitle him to eternal joy, with a crown and harp, in the altogether imaginary world to come.

Is it not evident that, in the increase of knowledge, civilization is to be perfected, while just in proportion Christianity is to decay, till the last of the gods shall die out, and even idiots and crazy folks shall forget to trust in such myths, and the fables that have been built upon them?

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—Independent Pulpit.

## METHODISM AND THE ARTIZAN CLASS.

THROUGH the medium of the *Methodist Times* prizes were recently offered for the best essays on "Why the Working Classes do not Go to Church." As the prize essays were all written by Methodists who *do* go to church, it will at once be seen that the essays could not be expected to give a true answer to the question. The *Methodist Times* should have sought the help of the genuine non-church-going artizan. The prize essays might then have been a little different.

As a sequel to this, the London Wesleyan Methodist Council has taken the subject up. The Rev. H. T. Smart, a minister who has shown some interest in social questions, was asked to open a discussion upon the subject of "Methodism and the Artizan Class." He responded with a lengthy paper, which to Secularists is noteworthy for two reasons—(1) his recognition of the fact that the majority of the people are outside the churches; and (2) his methods for capturing the stray sheep—secular, not spiritual.

Mr. Smart's admissions were calculated to cause dismay in the religious camp. He reminded the meeting that a census at Birmingham revealed five persons outside the churches for every one inside, and at Bolton 107,000 outside and only 18,000 inside.

Here is another damaging admission: "It is a melancholy observation to make, but I feel bound to say that some of the churches to whose very doors Providence has brought immense numbers of the working people are gradually becoming weaker instead of stronger. What can be more depressing than to contemplate these feeble and tottering churches which once were strong, and which have set before them great doors and effectual, but, for some reason or another, do not take advantage of them? They are surrounded by 'unpossessed possessions.' Ramoth in Gilead is theirs; but they are still, and take it not..... We all know chapels half empty in full neighborhoods where the population is increasing and the congregation declining, and my explanation of this is that while the world has been moving the Church has stood still. I could name chapels that answer to this description. All the conditions have changed during the last thirty years, but the Church is conducted on precisely the same principles, and the result is what we see."

Now for Mr. Smart's cure. This gentleman is much too smart to imagine that the "good old gospel" will draw of itself, so he hints at a lot of secular agencies wherewith to bait the hook and catch the working man. Firstly, free seats and a penny offertory (not absolutely "without money and without price," after all). Secondly, halls instead of chapels. What a confession of failure! The parson leaves his pulpit and takes to the platform. Thirdly, make working-men church officers. The Church won't be likely to do this. It likes rich men for church officers. The working-man cannot stump up the cash and invite the parson to supper, etc. Fourthly, canvass the men energetically. Throw tradition to the wind. Visit them in the dinner-hour. Know every family. Throw in the P. S. A. and a slate club. Mr. Smart concluded by asserting how troubled he was by the vast masses of non-church-going people, and by some non-going churches which have settled on their lees and outlived their usefulness.

The wind was taken out of Mr. Smart's sails by a Mr. Fleming, of Walworth, who said they had carried out at his chapel "all that Mr. Smart had recommended." They had visiting guilds, the largest slate club in London, "but they could not attract the working-classes." (It is amusing and significant to note that the *Methodist Times*, in its four-column report, entirely omits all reference to Mr. Fleming and his staggering statements. The *Christian World*, however, kindly supplies the omission.) Mr. Scott Lidgett reminded the brethren that at every social advance the Church had opposed. Mr. Holloway did not find slate clubs fill the church. Mr. Jackson said that the reason we did not get men into the churches was because Sunday was turned into nothing less than a great Labor Demonstration day. He could justify all that had been said as to the selfishness of the working-classes. We should persevere in our efforts to get Sunday closing, and all shops should be closed at ten o'clock on Saturday night. We heard too much about the love of God, and too little about the wrath of God for sin. (We want a little more hell-fire.) Mr. Griffiths advised "Short Sermons." (None at all would be better.) Mr. Fosket "did not think they had yet found the reason why working-men do not go to church." Right, Mr. Fosket; and, the way you Christians go to work, you are not likely to. You shirk the facts, and are blind to the real issue. Get John Burns, Tom Mann, Charles Watts, or C. Cohen to talk to you, and then you won't be long!

ALERT.

No simplicity of mind, no obscurity of station, can escape the universal duty of questioning all that we believe.—*William K. Clifford*, in "The Ethics of Belief."

## BOOK CHAT.

G. SAUTAYANA writes in the *New World*, of Boston, on "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare." He points out that the sonnets are "spiritual," but not Christian, and that in the plays religion is left out. He says: "In our day, with our wide and conscientious historical sympathies, it may be possible for us to find in other rites and doctrines than those of our ancestors an expression of some ultimate truth. But for Shakespeare, in the matter of religion, the choice lay between Christianity and nothing. He chose nothing; he chose to leave his heroes and himself in the presence of life and of death, with no other philosophy than that which the profane world can suggest and understand. This positivism, we need hardly say, was not due to any grossness or sluggishness of his imagination. Shakespeare could be idealistic when he dreamed, as he could be spiritual when he reflected. If Shakespeare had been without metaphysical capacity, or without moral maturity, we could have explained his strange insensibility to religion; but, as it is, we must marvel at his indifference, and ask ourselves what can be the causes of it." The explanation, that in Shakespeare's time "to be religious already began to mean to be Puritanical," seems to us altogether inadequate. The fact rather is, that Shakespeare had pondered the mysteries of life and death for himself, and found that the religious explanations did not suffice.

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John Burroughs was one of the very first to recognize his fellow poet, Walt Whitman, and under the title of *Whitman: A Study*, he resumes his appreciation published as *Notes on Walt Whitman* just thirty years ago. Here is a passage worth noticing: "The poet turns his face to earth, and not to heaven; he finds the miraculous, the spiritual, in the things about him, and gods and goddesses in the men and women he meets. He effaces the old distinctions; he establishes a sort of universal suffrage in spiritual matters; there are no select circles, no privileged persons. Is this the democracy of religion?—liberty, fraternity, and equality carried out in the spiritual sphere..... Carried out in practice, this democratic religion will not beget priests, or churches, or creeds, or rituals, but a life cheerful and full on all sides; helpful, loving, unworldly, tolerant, open-souled, temperate, fearless, and contemplating with pleasure, rather than with alarm, 'the exquisite transition of death.'"

\* \* \*

Mr. Burroughs draws a picture of the kind of women Whitman "invoked and predicted," which is worthy of attention: "They bear children, and are not ashamed; motherhood is their pride and their joy; they are cheerful, tolerant, friendly, think no evil, meet high and low on equal terms; they walk, row, climb mountains; they reach forth into the actual world of questions and events, open-minded, sympathetic, frank, natural, good-natured in all matters; home-workers, but larger than home, considerate, forgiving, unceremonious—in short, the large, fresh, wholesome, open-air natures, whose ideal so completely possessed Walt Whitman."

\* \* \*

*Primitive Christianity* (vol. i.), containing the Lost Lives of Jesus and the Apostles; showing the Dawn of Christianity in Jesus Christ; its Destruction by Martyrdom and Suppression; the Pagan Origin of the Roman Church; the Falsification of the Bible by Forgery, and the Authentic Gospel of St. John, comes to us from Joseph Rodes Buchanan, San Jose, California. It purports to be virtually a new revelation of Christianity by the founders themselves, whose designs have been considerably perverted.

\* \* \*

The first reflection upon a book making such pretences is, Why did the divine author of Christianity leave the world in ignorance so long, and allow his religion to be mainly represented by a false Church which imprisoned, tortured, and killed those with truer notions of what Christianity was? Perhaps Dr. Buchanan may say that the author could not find the right medium to communicate his doctrines till he appeared, and Christians themselves allow that God had to supplement his first revelation with a second one. We agree with so much of what Dr. Buchanan says about the Pagan character of the Church of Rome, and the evidences of ecclesiastical fraud and forgery, that we are prepared to examine his new revelation on its merits.

\* \* \*

It appears that Dr. Buchanan received through a Spiritist medium a greeting from Summerland. It is printed in capitals, as follows: "The Savior of Mankind has commissioned you with the greatest work yet seen or acknowledged upon earth. To you is given the great and ennobling work of establishing the spiritual faith, solid and secure. No one shall doubt the truth; the world shall bow down before it. We shall instruct you among others. Proceed with thy work.—ST. JOHN."

\* \* \*

The only revelation we get concerning this revelation,

which Mr. Buchanan says was "a great surprise," is that it was authenticated by a "Mrs. Decker (subsequently Mrs. Buchanan)." Those words may explain all to the people who at every mystery cry *Cherchez la femme*.

Dr. Buchanan, having the bump of self-esteem fairly developed, takes Mrs. Decker's and Saint John's word that he is going to establish the true faith. Hence this book, dedicated "To Jesus Christ... by one he has summoned to carry on his work." Examining the work on its own merits, we are bound to confess our doubts lest Dr. Buchanan has been deceived by a Diakka, one of those lying spirits who abound at mediumistic *séances*.

Dr. Buchanan's new reading of the Gospel goes on the principle of leaving out as interpolations all that to the modern mind seems unbecoming the character of Jesus. For instance, it omits the saying of Jesus to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." Such passages are those least likely to have been interpolated. We can believe that the Roman Church may have forged such a passage as the pun on Peter (Matthew xvi. 18), which endorsed its own pretensions; but it is too much to ask us to believe that it interpolated the prophecies of Jesus about his speedy second coming. If any prophecies are authentic, it is the unfulfilled ones. This should be an argument for the genuineness of St. John's prophecy to Joseph Rodes Buchanan.

A new volume, published by the Oriental Translation Fund, is announced as now ready. It is *The Harsa-Carita* or, *History of King Harsa*, by Bāna, translated from the Sanskrit by Professor E. B. Cowell, M.A., and F. W. Thomas, M.A. *The Harsa-Carita* is an interesting historical romance of the early part of the seventh century A.D.

We have received from Peter Eckler, publisher, 35 Fulton-street, New York, the "third part" of a book on *The Opposites of the Universe*, by Mamie Sands. It has as its motto, "The Universe is a Whirl of Opposites." The purpose of the book is to show that these opposites are eternal. The part before us deals with the theological, and has, as second title, "A Discourse about God." On such a subject there are a variety of opinions, and Mamie Sands, contrasting rational "flosophy" with religious ditto, cites a number of thinkers of various ages in the direction of the former species. The work is calculated to lead minds in a Freethought direction.

*The Literary Guide* for May (Watts & Co.) is an excellent number. The reviews of notable books are bright and interesting, the paragraphs are crisp and up to date, and Mr. Gould contributes an extremely well-written interview with Mr. Thomas Whittaker, one of our most fascinating essayists.

In his recently-published *American Lectures on Buddhism* Dr. T. W. Rhys Davids says: "The original Buddhism was the very contrary of esoteric. Gotama was accustomed, throughout his long career, to speak quite openly of the whole of the view of life which he had to propound." In the *Questions of King Melinda* the ideal teacher is described in the following words: "He should be zealous, teach nothing partially, keep nothing secret, and hold nothing back." Yet the Theosophists seek to graft their charlatany on Buddhism.

A still more notable statement by Dr. Rhys Davids is the following, which may be found on p. 116: "Throughout the long history of Buddhism, which is the history of more than half the people in the world for more than two thousand years, the Buddhists have been uniformly tolerant, and have appealed, not to the sword, but to intellectual and moral suasion. We have not a single instance, throughout the whole period, of even one of those religious persecutions which loom so largely in the history of the Christian Church."

Freethought.

Whether we coincide or not with the grand inquisition for truth which characterizes this age, and especially this country, no one who has the happiness of his species at heart can do otherwise than rejoice at the free and fearless scope of modern inquiry. It has been to enter the realms of superstition and intolerance and scrutinize the devices by which the trick of the tripod was received as the voice of the divinity, and the sleight-of-hand of the magician as miracle. Of Freethought, whether right or wrong, it may be said that a free public judgment will approve the good and repudiate the evil; and if mankind are not sufficiently enlightened for that discrimination, then must they relapse under the guidance of systems which have made the wars, the persecutions, and the ignorance from which the world has suffered so much.—*J. M. Saunders, Ph.D., LL.D.*

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

I SUPPOSE that so long as the human mind exists, it will not escape its deep-seated instinct to personify its intellectual conceptions. The science of the present day is as full of this particular form of intellectual shadow-worship as is the nescience of ignorant ages. The difference is, that the philosopher who is worthy of the name knows that his personified hypothesis, such as law, and force, and ether, and the like, are merely useful symbols, while the ignorant and the careless take them for adequate expressions of reality. So it may be that the majority of mankind may find the practice of morality made easier by the use of theological symbols. And, unless these are converted from symbols into idols, I do not see that science has anything to say to the practice, except to give an occasional warning of its dangers. But, when such symbols are dealt with as real existences, I think the highest duty which is laid upon men of science is to show that these dogmatic idols have no greater value than the fabrications of men's hands, the stocks and the stones which they have replaced.—*Huxley*.

All truth is safe, and nothing else is safe; and he who keeps back the truth, or withholds it from men, from motives of expediency is either a coward or a criminal, or both. He who knows only one religion knows none.—*Professor Max Müller*.

Any coward can fight a battle when he's sure of winning; but give me the man who has pluck to fight when he's sure of losing.—*George Eliot*.

On religion in particular the time appears to me to have come when it is the duty of all who, being qualified in point of knowledge, have on mature consideration satisfied themselves that the current opinions are not only false, but hurtful, to make their dissent known; at least, if they are among those whose station or reputation gives their opinion a chance of being attended to. Such an avowal would put an end, at once and forever, to the vulgar prejudice, that what is called, very improperly, unbelief is connected with any bad qualities either of mind or heart. The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments—of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue—are complete sceptics in religion; many of them refraining from avowal less from personal considerations than from a conscientious, though now, in my opinion, a most mistaken apprehension, lest by speaking out what would tend to weaken existing beliefs, and by consequence (as they suppose) existing restraints, they should do harm instead of good.—*J. S. Mill "Autobiography."*

PROFANE JOKES.

THE Reverend Sank Timonious—"Ah, Miss Epworth, you are working hard for the good cause this winter?" Miss Epworth League—"Yes, I want to do a lot of work this winter, so that I can enjoy my holiday next summer." The Reverend Sank Timonious—"Ah, but, my dear young lady, Satan never takes a holiday, not even in summer, you know." Miss Epworth League—"I know; but, then, Satan is used to the heat."

Teacher—"Why was Solomon the wisest man in the world?" Boy—"He had so many wives to advise him." Teacher (a strong-minded female)—"Well, that is not the answer in the book, but you may go up top."

A good old Methodist lady, very particular, and very pious once kept a boarding-house in New York. Staunch to her principles, she would take no one to board who did not believe in the eternal punishment of a large portion of the race. But the people were more intent on carnal comforts than spiritual health, so that in time her house became empty, much to her grief and alarm. After some time a bluff old sea-captain knocked at the door, and the old lady answered the call. "Good morning, ma'am. Can you give me board for two or three days? Got my ship here, and shall be off as soon as I load." "Wa'al, I don't know," said the old lady. "Oh, house full, eh?" "No, but—" "But what, ma'am?" "I don't take any unclean or carnal people in my house. What do you believe?" "About what?" "Why, do you believe that anyone will be condemned?" "Oh, thunder! yes." "Do you?" said the good woman, brightening up; "well, how many souls do you think will be on fire eternally?" "Don't know, ma'am, really—never calculated that." "Can't you guess?" "Can't say—perhaps fifty thousand." "Wa'al, hem!" mused the old woman; "I guess I'll take you. Fifty thousand burning souls is better than nothing."

"A great many people sleep between these walls," the verger said, as he showed some visitors through the church, under whose floor had been buried many of the dead of former ages. "Same way over in our country," was the reply. "Why don't they get a livelier preacher?"

## 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, O. Watts, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, W. J. Ramsey, "The Curse of the Cross." Preceded by vocal and instrumental concert. May 1, at 9, Smoking concert and dance.  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Science and Religion."  
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, General and social meeting to discuss the Ethical policy at the next School Board election.  
SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Moorgate-street, E.C.): 11.15, Children's Flower Service. Addresses by Dr. Conway, Mrs. Kelsey, and F. J. Gould.  
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 7, Washington Sullivan, "Ethics as a Standard of Value."  
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Leslie Stephen, "Pascal."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, O. Cohen, "Christianity and Woman."  
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, C. Cohen, "Why we Reject Christianity."  
EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, J. Thurlow.  
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, H. P. Ward.  
HARROW-ROAD (corner of Waltherton-road): 3.30, A. B. Moss, "Saints and Sinners."  
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "A New Age of Reason."  
KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Religion and Morality."  
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, F. Pack.  
LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon's lane): 11.30, H. P. Ward, "Shall we Live after we are Dead?"  
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Ten Commandments"; 7, F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus?" May 5, at 8, F. Haslam, "Bible Stories."  
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Evolution and Reaction."  
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, H. P. Ward.

### COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Special meeting of members.  
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Stanley Jones, "Evolution and Reaction."  
DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, A. Social.  
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Annual business meeting of Society—election of officers; 6.30, Social meeting.  
LEEDS (Crampton's Hotel, Briggate): 7, A lecture written by the Hon. Auberon Herbert.  
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, H. Smith will lecture. Important committee meeting after lecture.  
PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "The Poet of Atheism"; 8, Announcement as to trip for following Sunday.  
SOUTH SHIELDS (People's Palace, Ocean-road): Harry Snell—7, "Christ as a Moral Study."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 11.30, H. Snell, "Christianity and Science."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—May 2, Camberwell.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—May 2, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Kilburn. 9, m., Clerkenwell; e., Bradlaugh Club. 23, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham-rye. 30, e., Edmonton. June 6, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Hammersmith. 13, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 27, m., Wood Green; e., Edmonton.

H. PERCY WARD, 9 Leighton-crescent, Leighton-road, N.W.—May 2, m., Limehouse; a., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith. 9, m., Wood Green; e., New Brompton. 16, m., Mile End; e., Edmonton. 23, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Finsbury Park; e., Mile End. 30, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell Hall.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—May 16, m., Hyde Park. 23, e., Hammersmith. June 13, a., Harrow; e., Kilburn. July 11, e., Hammersmith. 18, m., Hyde Park. August 8, a., Harrow; e., Kilburn. September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

## POSITIVISM.

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

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

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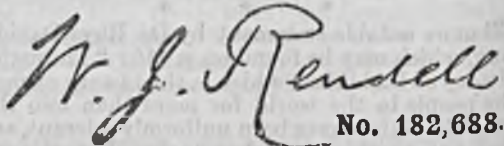
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