

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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THE OLD WAX NOSE.

III.—THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.

HAVING examined Dean Farrar's observations on the Bible Canon, and seen that it is a more or less arbitrary selection from Hebrew and early Christian literature, many of the books being anonymous, while others bear the names of authors who did not write them, and most of them being much later compositions than orthodoxy supposes; we now take a leap forward to his twelfth chapter to see what he has to say on the subject of the Bible and Science. His first object is to drive home to his co-religionists the mischief of adhering to the old doctrine of Bible infallibility. Consequently he does not mince matters in dealing with the difficulties of the literal theory of inspiration. Writers like Gausson argue that the Bible is a perfect authority in matters of science. Mr. Gladstone argues that Moses supernaturally anticipated the teachings of modern evolution, and that the inspired fishermen of Galilee, notably St. Peter, no less supernaturally anticipated all that modern Astronomy teaches as to the final destiny of our planet. Dr. Farrar declines to follow them in this perilous path. He does not walk in the opposite direction, for that would lead him among the "infidels." He strikes off at right angles, and takes the line that the Bible was never intended to teach science, or anything else but religion. He quotes with approval the saying of Archbishop Sumner that "the Scriptures have never revealed a scientific truth." He maintains that the writers of Scripture had only a natural knowledge of exact science; and that was precious little, and was indeed rather ignorance than knowledge, as they belonged to "the most unscientific of all nations in the most unscientific of all ages." "It is now understood by competent inquirers," he says, "that geology is God's revelation to us of one set of truths, and Genesis of quite another." "Nature," he says, "is a book which contains a revelation of God in one sphere, and Scripture a book which contains a revelation of him in another. Both books have often been misread, but no truth revealed in the one can be irreconcilable with any truth revealed in the other." This, however, is a mere truism. One truth cannot be irreconcilable with another truth. Dr. Farrar's statement sounds imposing and consolatory, but when you look into its meaning you see it is only a pulpit platitude.

But before we proceed to criticise Dr. Farrar's position, let us glance at his attack upon the literalists. He charges them with having opposed and persecuted every modern science, and with having manufactured the most absurd scientific theories from the text of the Bible; the said theories being not only ludicrous, but irreconcilably opposed to each other. Lactantius, with the Bible in his hand, ridiculed the rotundity of the earth. Roger Bacon and Galileo were imprisoned and tortured. John Wesley declared the Copernican astronomy to be in opposition to Scripture. Thomas Burnet's "Sacred Theory of the Earth," founded upon the Bible, was assailed by William Whiston, who based a different "Sacred Theory" upon the very same book. Buffon, the great French scientist, was compelled by the Sorbonne to recant, and to abandon everything in his writings that was "contrary to the narrative of Moses." Even when God (that is to say Dr. Simpson) gave to the world the priceless boon of anaesthetics, there were many Biblicists who declared that

the use of chloroform in cases of painful confinement was flying in the face of God's curse upon the daughters of Eve. Catholic and Protestant have alike pitted the Bible against science, and both have been ignominiously beaten.

But this is not all. The theologians have been disgraced as well as defeated. With respect to the Buffon case, for instance, Dr. Farrar writes as follows:—

"The line now taken by apologists is very different from that of previous centuries, and less honest. It declares that Genesis and geology are in exact accord. It no longer refuses to believe the facts of nature, but instead of this it boldly sophisticates the facts of Scripture."

John Stuart Mill said that every new truth passes through three phases of reception. At first, it is declared to be false and dangerous; secondly, it is discovered that there is something to be said for it; lastly, its opponents turn round and declare "we said so all along." Dr. Farrar dots all the "i's" in Mill's statement. He asserts that "religious teachers" first say of every scientific discovery, "It is blasphemous and contrary to Scripture." Next they say, "There is nothing in Scripture which absolutely contradicts it." Finally they say, "It is distinctly revealed in Scripture itself."

Dr. Farrar puts the historic case against "orthodoxy"—which, of course, is not Christianity!—in the following fashion:—

"The history of most modern sciences has been as follows. Its discoverers have been proscribed, anathematized, and, in every possible instance, silenced or persecuted; yet before a generation has passed the champions of a spurious orthodoxy have had to confess that their interpretations were erroneous; and—for the most part without an apology and without a blush—have complacently invented some new line of exposition by which the phrases of Scripture can be squared into semblable accordance with the now acknowledged facts."

Even in the comparatively recent case of Darwin this was perfectly true. Dr. Farrar, who preached Darwin's funeral sermon in Westminster Abbey, says that he "endured the fury of pulpits and Church Congresses." He did so with quiet dignity; not an angry word escaped him. Yet before Darwin's death not only was the scientific world converted, but leading theologians said that, if Darwinism were proved to be true, there was "nothing in it contrary to the creeds of the Catholic faith."

Darwin never answered the clergy. He had better work to do. All he did was to smile at them. In one of his letters he said that when the men of science are agreed about anything, all the clergy have to do is to say ditto. He understood that when science is victorious it will always have clerical patronage. Had he been able to do it, he would have smiled, in that beautiful benevolent way of his, at Dr. Farrar's funeral sermon. The worthy Dean thought they had got Darwin at last; and the grand old philosopher might have said, "Why yes, my *corpse!*"

So much for Dr. Farrar's impeachment of "orthodoxy" and its doctrine of plenary inspiration. Let us now examine his own position, and see whether it is logical as well as convenient.

Take the first chapter of Genesis. It is not a scientific revelation, though it seems to be. Whoever wrote it had only the science of his time. Nevertheless, it is of "transcendent value," according to Dr. Farrar. "Its true and deep object," he says, "was to set right an erring world

in the supremely important knowledge that there was one God and Father of us all, the Creator of heaven and earth, a God who saw all things which he has made, and pronounced them to be very good."

This is very pretty in its way; but how absurd it is in the light of the fact that the Hebrew creation story is all borrowed! While the Jews were desert nomads, long before the concoction of their sacred scriptures, the doctrine of a Creator of heaven and earth was known in India and in Egypt, not to recite a list of other nations. If this is all the first chapter of Genesis teaches, we may well exclaim, "Thank you for nothing!" It is a curious "revelation" which only discloses what is familiar. Had the Bible never been written, had the Jews never existed, the "true and deep object" of the first chapter of Genesis would have been quite as well subserved. Wherever the Christian missionaries have gone they have found the creation story in front of them. Wherever they took it they were carrying coals to Newcastle.

We venture to suggest to Dr. Farrar that if God thinks all things he has made are very good, there are many persons who do not share his opinion. It would be idle to read that text to a sailor pursued by a shark. We could multiply this instance a thousandfold; but why give a list of all the predatory and parasitical creatures on this planet, from human tyrants and despoilers down to cholera microbes? Dr. Farrar may reply that everything ends in mystery, that we must have faith, that it is our interest as well as our duty to believe. But that is exactly what the Catholic Church says, and Dr. Farrar laughs it to scorn. The truth is, that all theology is ultimately a matter of faith; and the quarrel about more or less is a domestic difference. The greater difference is between Faith and Reason. Cardinal Newman saw this clearly. He pointed out that every mystery of the Roman Catholic faith is matched by a mystery in Protestant theology.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

SIXTY YEARS OF FREETHOUGHT.

(Continued from page 355.)

DURING the entire Victorian era the *Westminster Review* has maintained its advocacy of principles of freedom and progress. At the beginning of the reign it was under the direct conduct of John Stuart Mill. It admitted articles from Alexander Bain, Harriet Martineau, Blanco White, W. J. Fox, Mazzini, G. H. Lewes, and other advanced thinkers. When it passed into the hands of Dr. Chapman the same policy was continued. The most "Liberal" writers of the day, including Herbert Spencer, George Eliot, F. W. Newman, J. A. Froude, and W. M. W. Call, contributed to its pages.

In 1841, while engaged in the composition of his *System of Logic*, Mill entered into correspondence with Auguste Comte, and from that time we may trace the influence of the great French Positivist slowly percolating into this country. Mill's *Logic*, first published in 1843, laid down sound foundations for dealing positively with questions of ethics, metaphysics, and theology, by the guidance of those principles by which men of science proceed in proving their speculations in physical causes and effects. Mill combined an ardent interest in human progress with close attention to its laws and conditions. Similar influence was seen in the popular *Biographical History of Philosophy* in 1845-6 which George Henry Lewes contributed to Knight's series, and which, in a third edition, was amplified into a *Biographical History of Philosophy, from Thales to Comte*. Lewes united clear thought with intellectual intrepidity. The like may be said of George Grote, whose *History of Greece* (1846-56) was a contribution to philosophy as well as to history, and whose essay on *The Influence of Natural Religion* is a valuable indictment of theology.

Mr. Holyoake, who had written *A Short and Easy Method with the Saints* and *Paley Refuted in his Own Words* in prison, and who edited the *Movement* when out, started the *Reasoner* in June, 1846. At first it taxed all his personal resources, but it fulfilled a long course of usefulness, lasting, with some changes of format and sub-title, over fifteen years. Chilton was one of the early contributors to the *Reasoner*, and Mr. Holyoake was from the first assisted by men like

T. W. Thornton, W. J. Birch, and W. H. Ashurst ("Edward Search"). Afterwards H. Merrit ("Christopher"), G. Hooper ("Eugene"), Percy Greg ("Lionel Holdreth"), Major Evans Ball ("Undecimus"), S. D. Collet ("Panthæa"), C. D. Collet, J. C. Farn, R. W. Mackay, H. Tyrell, F. W. Newman, and C. R. Newman, his elder brother, who wrote as "A Recluse," were among the writers. As "sub." Mr. Holyoake had the assistance of his brother Austin, and, towards the end, of Mr. John Watts.

On March 30, 1850, appeared the first number of a sixpenny paper, the *Leader*. It was edited by Thornton Hunt, son of Leigh Hunt. Among the contributors were George Henry Lewes, Marian Evans, Herbert Spencer, G. J. Holyoake, G. Hooper, Gerald Massey, George Meredith, W. J. Linton, F. W. Newman, Robert Owen, W. S. Landor, and W. E. Forster. A prominent item in its program was "the complete freeing of secular education from all restraints of sect or dogmatical religion." The term "secular," used to comprise the sum of knowledge and duty, and the word "Secularist," were first used in the *Reasoner* towards the end of 1851. Presently the *Reasoner* became "a Gazette of Secularism," and Mr. Holyoake wrote *Secularism, the Practical Philosophy of the People*, and founded Secular Societies.

1850 witnessed the publication of Francis William Newman's *Phases of Faith*, a work of real human interest, which showed the progress of a truth-loving Christian to "infidelity," as it was called. In the same year was published R. W. Mackay's *Progress of the Intellect*; Dr. J. A. Giles's *Hebrew Records*; and Spencer's *Social Statics*, in which evolution was first applied to sociology. Smaller publications were Holyoake's able *Logic of Death*, which went through many editions, and an obscure pamphlet entitled *A Few Words on the Christian's Creed*, by C. Bradlaugh, jun., and dedicated to the Rev. J. G. Packer, "incumberer" of St. Peter's, Hackney-road,* the author not yet seventeen, to be heard of later after his return from serving in the 7th Dragoon Guards. Meanwhile may be noted his appearance as an outdoor propagandist in Bonner's Fields, and a lecture on "The Past, Present, and Future of Theology," delivered at a hall in Philpot-street, Stepney, on Saturday, October 10, 1850, with G. J. Holyoake in the chair.

The Socialists have the distinction of building and opening the first halls for the promulgation of heresy. The only hall in London for a long period available for Sunday lectures was the Scientific and Literary Institute at John-street, of which Mr. Truelove (happily still living) was for many years the secretary. Afterwards Mr. W. D. Saull, one of the influential supporters of the John-street Institute, helped to found the first Hall of Science in the City-road, at which Mr. J. P. Adams was secretary. This gentleman was also concerned in promoting the Philpot-street hall, where, I have heard, both C. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Harriet Law made their first appearance. Mr. E. Truelove, in 1852, opened a shop—240 Strand, near Temple Bar—where he kept prominent Freethought works, and reissued the *Diegesis* of Taylor, the works of Paine and Voltaire, the *System of Nature* of d'Holbach, and published the much-abused *Elements of Social Science*, etc.

In 1851 a *Freethinkers' Magazine* was attempted, but it only reached one volume. A notable publication of the same year was *The Library of Reason*, a valuable set of reprints from Hume, Spinoza, Hibbert, Ensor, Burdon, Southwell, Strauss, Lyell, etc., edited by Chilton, and assisted (for such publications were not self-supporting) by W. J. Birch, who in '48 had published his own *Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*, which was followed in '56 by *An Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of the Bible*. The year of the Great Exhibition saw also the publication of W. R. Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, after Hennell's work the most scholarly onslaught on Christian evidences which had then appeared; Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling*, in which his own heresy is unmistakably shown; and the *Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development*, between H. G. Atkinson and Harriet Martineau, whose illustrations of political economy had already made her name famous. The work provoked a great outcry, for it proclaimed her rejection of supernatural Christianity and her adherence to the Positive school of thought. In 1853 appeared her condensed version of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, and the same year was published, in the Bohn

* Since republished, and may be obtained of Mr. Forder.

Scientific Library, Comte's *Philosophy of the Sciences*, an exposition of his principles by G. H. Lewes, portions of which had appeared in the *Leader*.

In October, 1852, Mr. Holyoake, at a Conference called at the Secular Institute, Manchester, made the first attempt to organize the Freethinkers of the country. He had lectured much in the provinces. In May of the following year, when the *Reasoner* had reached its fourteenth volume, £250 were presented to Mr. Holyoake by friends of Free-thought at a public dinner, presided over by Thornton Hunt. With this sum steps were taken to establish a central publishing house and propagandist institute in Fleet-street. The business of James Watson was taken over, and a series issued entitled "The Cabinet of Reason," in which appeared *The Task of To-day*, an able plea for Freethought by Major Evans Bell; *Why do the Clergy Avoid Discussion?* by Mr. Holyoake; his *Organization: Not of Arms, but of Ideas*; *New Germany*, by Arnold Ruge, who afterwards translated Buckle; Spinoza's *Politics*, translated by an eccentric genius, William Maccall; Pemberton's *History of Pel-Verjuice*, etc. Mr. Holyoake at this period also had notable discussions with the Rev. Mr. Townley, the Rev. Mr. Rutherford, and Brewin Grant.

Soon after his release Charles Southwell started the *Investigator* (1843). It only lasted for a single volume, but contained some notable articles. In April, 1854, Robert Cooper, whose *Infidel's Text-Book* (1846) was re-written and then being published in parts as *The Bible and its Evidences*, commenced the London *Investigator*, a monthly journal of Secularism. This he edited for three years, writing some good articles on "Science v. Theology" and "Admissions of Theologians." He was succeeded first by "Anthony Collins" (W. H. Johnson), and in 1859 by "Iconoclast" (Charles Bradlaugh), of whom an early lithographic portrait forms the frontispiece of this volume, which has as the motto of its preface the lines from Shelley's *Queen Mab* :—

There is no God ;
Infinity within, infinity without, belie creation.

Notable contributions in prose and verse to this last volume appeared over the initials "B. V." and the name "Bysshe Vanolis," which was used by James Thomson to show his regard for Shelley and Novalis.

In 1855 appeared Bain's *Senses and the Intellect*, a work bringing up to date the conclusions of scientific experimental philosophy. The same year witnessed the publication of Kalisch's rationalizing *Exodus* and Jowett's *Epistles of St. Paul*, and of Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Psychology*, dealing with mental evolution. Soon after we find Spencer writing in the *Westminster* on "Progress: its Law and Cause," and on "The Nebular Hypothesis," which last appeared in July, 1858, just before the papers of Wallace and Darwin on Natural Selection were read to the Linnean Society.

In 1858 appeared Mr. Holyoake's *Trial of Theism*, in which he embodied much of his best controversial work in the *Reasoner*. Soon after he issued his *Principles of Secularism*. The first volume of Buckle's bold introduction to the *History of Civilization in England* saw the light in this year, and made a sensation by its brave attempt to evolve order out of the chaos of history by a scientific basis, reducing human affairs to the principle of natural law. His thesis, that intellectual truths are the cause of progress, which depends more on doubt than on religion, occasioned much animadversion; but, despite a deal of unjust disparagement, Buckle's magnificent fragment has had great intellectual weight. Buckle also spoke out boldly against the punishment for blasphemy of an insane Cornish well-sinker, named Thomas Pooley, who chalked some words about Jesus Christ on a parson's gate in 1857.

In 1859 appeared the most popular and effective of Mill's works, his little treatise *On Liberty*, in which he defended the rights of Freethought and the unrestricted discussion of religion, and incidentally challenged the morality of Christianity as incomplete and one-sided. Mill himself regarded this as likely to be the most lasting of all his works.

1859 will, however, be chiefly memorable in the history of thought for the publication of the patient researches of Darwin embodied in his *Origin of Species*, a work which evoked a howl of consternation and execration from the theologians, who have ever since been endeavoring to adjust their old dogmas to the new teachings of evolution.

Legal progress during this period was shown by

the Dissenters' Chapel Bill, passed July 19, 1844, by which property left to Unitarians was for the first time secured. In the following year Jews were admitted to corporate offices, and a year later were put on the same footing as Protestant Dissenters, with regard to their chapels and schools; and other penalties for not conforming to the Church of England were repealed.

In 1847 the Baron Lionel de Rothschild was elected M.P. for the City of London, but the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge petitioned against Jews being allowed to sit, and a Bill for the removal of Jewish disabilities was thrown out by the Lords. In '49 he was again elected, but it was not till 1858 that Jews were admitted to both Houses of Parliament, and in 1860 the words, "On the faith of a Christian," were expunged from the Parliamentary oath. In 1854 Dissenters were first allowed to take degrees at Oxford, after much struggle; and in 1856 Cambridge followed.

Another sign of progress was the discovery and spread of the use of anæsthetics. When Sir James Young Simpson first employed chloroform in obstetrics, he was met with a clerical outcry that he was seeking to remove God's curse on woman recorded in Genesis iii. 16. But human advantage soon triumphed over alleged divine commands. When in 1853 the Scotch Presbytery petitioned for the appointment of a day of National Fasting and Humiliation, Lord Palmerston, then Home Secretary, replied in a letter dated October 19: "To those who have asked for a day of prayer and fasting to get rid of the cholera I would say: 'Remove the cause; see to your bad drainage, your filthy cesspools; cease to drink impure water; study and obey the sanitary laws.'" *Punch* expressed the growing secular sentiment in these lines :—

Filth and self-seeking from us cast,
Believing that the fittest fast;
For of all prayers beneath the sun
There is no prayer like work well done.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

HUMAN MISERY AND ITS CAUSES.

VOLTAIRE is reported to have said, "Many are destined to reason wrongly, others not to reason at all, and others to persecute those who do reason." The truth of this allegation is amply verified in connection with the existence of human misery. That such misery abounds on every side is too palpable a fact to allow us to doubt its reality for a moment. Mental anguish, hunger, the want of proper clothing, decent homes, and the effects of bodily pain, are visible on every hand. As Hume puts it: "The first entrance into life gives anguish to the new-born infant and to its wretched parent. Weakness, impotence, distress, attend each stage of that life, and it is at last finished in agony and horror." Fortunately, this may not be accurate of every birth, life, and death; but that it is true of too many cases is proved by undeniable evidence.

Years ago Professor Fawcett, in his work, *Pauperism: its Causes and Remedies*, depicted the suffering and misery then existing, in the following forcible language: "Visit the great centres of our commerce and trade, and what will be observed? The direst poverty always accompanying the greatest wealth.....Within a stone's throw of the stately streets and large manufactories of such towns as Manchester and Liverpool there will be found miserable alleys and narrow courts in which people drag out an existence steeped in a misery and wretchedness which baffle description." A similar picture of the degrading and harrowing condition of the poor of "Christian England" could with painful truth be drawn to-day. Should anyone doubt our statement, let him carefully read *The White Slaves of England*, by Robert H. Sherard, which was recently published, and he will find a description of a large portion of the toiling classes of this country that is sufficient to almost cause us to despair of justice ever being done to one of the most deserving sections of humanity. On May 25 last Sir Walter Foster, at the meeting of the Conference on the rural housing question, spoke of the "kind of hovel" inhabited by the agricultural laborer, which was described as a "human cattle-pen with one bedroom, into which man and wife and children of all ages, and sometimes even lodgers, are indiscriminately crowded." Such facts as these

reveal a state of wretchedness and degradation, fraught with untold misery, that is a disgrace to any country.

Now, the solution to the problem involved in reference to the condition of human misery, such as is here delineated, has yet to be furnished. Christianity, after twenty centuries of preaching, having wealth, power, and influence at its command, has failed to give any adequate explanation why the misery exists, or to supply efficient remedies for its removal. Why is this? Does not Voltaire supply the answer in his affirmation with which we commenced this article? It is too true that many persons "reason wrongly" in urging that the ills of society are either a part of God's plan of government, or that they are entirely the result of man's folly and criminality; other persons never reason at all, but take it for granted that human misery is a necessary condition of life, and, therefore, with the usual orthodox resignation, they exclaim, "Let God's will be done." These individuals have never been slow to "persecute those who do reason" upon the subject. Hence Freethinkers, who have always been active in deploring the sufferings of their kind, and in seeking for true remedies, have been persecuted and prosecuted for their laudable efforts. Political and social reformers who have propounded schemes for the amelioration of the condition of the community have been abused, ostracized, and tabooed by those very people who are too indifferent to attempt to reason, and by others who lack the ability to reason correctly. Among the victims to this spirit of persecution may be mentioned the philosophic followers of Robert Owen, of Malthus, and the opponents of orthodox teachings. In 1842 Mr. George Jacob Holyoake was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for suggesting, as a remedy for miseries then existing, that he "would put the Deity on half-pay." This would have been a very sensible thing to have done, considering that millions of money were being spent in the name of the Unknown, while thousands of human beings were suffering from the pangs of starvation.

We believe that it was Pearson who placed the whole of human misery to the credit of pain in body and remorse of conscience; all other evils he thought might be attributed to the imagination. No doubt physical pain, if intense and continuous, often renders life a misery and death a relief. But the real causes of human misery are not confined within the limits here assigned. There are certain affections of the mind, caused through entertaining erroneous views as to man's nature and destiny, which produce constant unrest to such a degree as to influence all human actions. If, for instance, we ignore the natural desire for good, we deprive ourselves of a potent incentive to that conduct which tends to happiness. Further, if a man thinks only of himself, and has no regard for others, his life will be divested of a prolific source of conscious pleasure. Certainly some of the happiest persons we have met have been those whose lives have been devoted to the service of mankind. Nothing is more calculated to enhance the comfort of a person's career than the consciousness of having done something to lessen the misery of others. There are thousands of honest men and women who are strangers to the real joys of life through no fault of their own. They are the victims of circumstances over which they have no control, or, at least, not sufficient to enable them to secure self-emancipation. We do not refer to individuals who are indolent, thoughtless, and improvident, but to the persevering, reflective, and frugal class. We mean men and women who yearn for the comforts of existence, but whose lives are surrounded by miseries imposed upon them by the conditions of a wrongly-governed society. It should be regarded by all Secularists as a pleasing duty to endeavor to discover the causes of this drawback to human happiness, and then to seek how to remove them.

The instability of human affairs, the variations in fortunes, and the unequal distribution of wealth are among the causes of human misery. The capacity of man is superior to that of all other creatures; for he has not only intelligence and memory, but he has also foresight. Hence, he not only suffers from a recollection of past distress, but to this are added the torments of the present and the apprehension of future possible calamities. Hume once remarked: "All the good of life united would not make a very happy man; but all the ills united would make a wretch indeed." In our opinion, the two greatest causes of social misery are ignorance and poverty. Although the earth is alike the apparent inheritance of the ignorant and the learned, the

rich and the poor, yet their enjoyment of the things of the earth cannot be equal. As long as what are called the lower links in the chain of society are dragging along in ignorance and wretchedness, misery must be the lot of the majority of our race. Unremitting toil, the wants of the hour, press heavily upon the masses from the cradle to the grave. That many of the evils of modern industrial life are of man's own creation we admit; that, however, does not lighten the burden of those who have to bear them. What we desire is that men should learn what to do, and should have the opportunity of doing it. "Live and let live" is a grand maxim, but those who never labor cannot appreciate its full significance. Franklin described war as a robbery, commerce as a cheat, and agriculture as the only honest calling. Yet the very men in our own country who have followed the "honest calling" have been the greatest sufferers from ignorance, injustice, and neglect.

No doubt theological errors are among the prominent causes of human misery. They have blighted the highest hopes of man, diverting his attention from the duties of life, and filling his mind with gloom and despair. Under the influence of theology rational enjoyment has been condemned, and innocent pleasures have been stigmatized as crimes. It has made death, that is supposed to end all suffering, the beginning of endless woes. Kingcraft and priestcraft, with their wars and persecutions, have produced untold misery. In the morning of life, instead of fostering the buoyant spirits of youth, theology produces feelings of sadness and terror known only to those who have been its victims. Children are taught in orthodox schools and family circles that a great Being watches over all their actions, like a detective, for the purpose of pouncing upon the first wrong thought or deed, and remembering it against them, so that in the future the punishment may be meted out that it has deserved. From the very inception of such teaching the child's nature becomes altered, and so, indeed, does the whole face of universal nature become, as it were, metamorphosed. The child loses much of its proper egoity, or self-hood, and becomes, even to itself, a dual being, a living monstrosity, partly human, partly superhuman. The future life becomes an abnormal existence, the child growing either into manhood or womanhood under the belief that it is ever living "in the great taskmaster's eye"—in other words, that it is always subject to the watchful superintendence of a jealous God. Thus, from the dawn of human existence to its close, theology is the destroyer of the sweetest charms of life.

Are we to suppose, then, that human misery will never cease? We fear that it never will until justice becomes a real factor in the regulation of society. Still, much can be done in decreasing the sorrows and wrongs of life by each individual acting upon the principle of self-help and self-control. Cultivate the body, discipline the intellect, and keep the mind free from all superstition, then theological fears may be banished and pain and suffering mitigated. The material conditions of society may be altered when life is held to be of higher value than property, when the wealth that can purchase comforts is more widely and fairly circulated, and when the power of intelligence shall supersede brute force. As Secularists, we desire to improve existence by suppressing the inferior, and encouraging the superior, qualities of human nature. We recognise the possibility of a happier state of society if mankind would but foster and cultivate better and more exalted conditions. Then, in the language of the poet, man may possibly exclaim:—

Earth yet shall know,
By a new light, the secret of her past;
Shall ask no more, "Why do I suffer so?"
But smile in one great harmony at last.

CHARLES WATTS.

A photographic group, including the president, vice-presidents, and delegates at the Leicester Conference, was taken by a friend at Longcliffe, and copies can be obtained from Mr. Pinder, Secular Institute, Leicester.

General Ricciotti Garibaldi refused the insignia of Grand Officer of the Order of the Redeemer which the Greek Government intended to confer on him. The mention of the title was probably enough.

The people in the Lake district do not like to have Sunday trippers share with them the delights of the scenery, and complain that Sunday steamers are to run on Windermere Lake. The Furness Railway Company know better than to heed the interested opposition.

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

THE New York *World* of May 23 gives some poses of Colonel Ingersoll, of which our copy is very poorly printed. The letterpress accompanying them will be of interest to our readers. It is as under:—

In the law court and the lawyer's office Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll served a faithful apprenticeship and achieved a brilliant success. Of late years, however, his personal connection with even his own legal business has gradually decreased, and during the last year one could almost count on his fingers the number of times that the veteran lawyer has visited his own downtown office. It is almost always in the Colonel's comfortable Madison Avenue home that he is to be found now-a-days, and it was here, among his favorite pictures, books, and bric-a-brac, that Mr. Ingersoll posed for the Sunday *World's* photographer a few days since.

"I work very little now," said the Colonel, a little sadly. "It is impossible to keep up to the standard of one's activity when one is not feeling well. My study is pretty well deserted now-a-days, for my writing is done at long intervals, and most of my energy is given to my lecture tours, which are frequent. It is true that I have not lectured as much as usual this year, but I have by no means given it up, or even thought of such a thing."

As he grows older, the Colonel cares more and more for home life and quiet home pleasures, and he ranks the simple joys of home as the highest and truest. He is devoted to children, and takes an even more than grandfatherly pride in his daughter's two tiny children. Eva, the youngest grandchild, is a serious little maiden of five years, who was recently photographed with her famous grandfather, and who successfully beguiles a large share of his leisure time.

There are other hours, however, when Mr. Ingersoll is too tired to write and too ill to lecture, and his caller was inquisitive as to the manner in which these were spent. "I never tire of reading," Mr. Ingersoll replied very simply, as he took up a copy of Shakespeare. "It is the most effectual as well as the pleasantest means of relaxation. And Shakespeare is my favorite always."

"But when you are very tired?"

"Then I read Shakespeare just as assiduously as when I am not. There isn't any pleasure or any benefit in reading a poor book, you know. And at other times I read for the most part science, metaphysics, and poetry."

"How about modern books—the most modern?"

"There is altogether too much written," said Mr. Ingersoll, "and a good share of it isn't worth reading. I read very few contemporary novels, however, and do not wish to be understood as condemning them. Of late years I have taken more pleasure in William Morris than in any one else. He has written some beautiful things. And Swinburne was certainly very brilliant at the beginning of his career, but he has deteriorated."

Colonel Ingersoll is never too busy to read newspapers. His interest in humanity is too deep to permit his ignoring humanity's struggles and sacrifices, as they are recorded in the morning news columns. Not a single item of war news escapes him.

"More evidences that this treacherous Weyler has broken his word," was the comment on the morning news on the day that these photographs were taken. "This policy of his will never pay. As a result, nobody will ever believe a thing he says, even if it does chance to be the truth. It is strange that people do not learn that the truth can never be concealed. The truth is always known sooner or later, whether it be the gravest issue of a war or of the most trivial concern of life."

"As for war itself, it is wholly barbarous. And it is one of the strangest facts now confronting us that the progress of civilization does not check warfare. This century has been one of the bloodiest of history, and wars are raging still. Yet thinking men and women never wish for war. When it is mentioned we hear a wild outcry that is not the voice of patriotism. True patriots do not wish for it. The cry for war comes from the streets—the very gutter."

Between his more serious moments the Colonel finds much diversion in observing the strange cults of the present day. "They are all alike," he remarked, with caustic emphasis; "they all come from the same source and indicate the same mental condition."

"What do you think of Theosophy?" was suggested.

"Insanity," replied Mr. Ingersoll, succinctly, "absolute madness. Never ask me to believe anything which is contrary to all human experiences, and which outrages the human reason. Purple and green aura and the phenomena that this Mrs. Besant talks about are an insult to reason, and I really doubt whether they ever came within the bounds of human experience. These people first deceive themselves, and then they go on to deceive others."

Even so marked a divergence from the paths of common sense as the mazes of Theosophy afford, however, does not discourage the champion of Rationalism. "There is less superstition every year" is his expressed conviction. "The hold of myths and supernaturalism on the public mind grows constantly more weak."

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

THERE are obvious disadvantages in tracing history backwards. Yet, in the case of documents claiming to be sacred and of extreme antiquity, the sound method would doubtless be to proceed step by step from the near to the remote. By so doing we should soonest become acquainted with the real difficulties attending the subject. We should see how rapidly we got to the region of conjecture, where interested theories did duty for well-ascertained facts.

Let us start, then, with the Revised English Bible of 1880-85. This at once carries us back to the Authorized Version of 1611, of which it pretends only to be a revision, by the aid of manuscripts, both then in existence and recovered since. But the version of 1611, on what did it depend? Largely upon the Bishop's Bible of 1568, partly on the Geneva Bible of 1560. And then? Partly upon the Greek versions, but still more on the Latin. These versions mainly depended upon the Latin Vulgate attributed to Jerome. This version was not only the accepted one of the Latin Church, it was decreed by the Council of Trent to have precedence over all versions, even those in Hebrew and Greek, from which it is said to have been translated. To this day it remains the standard version of the largest Church in Christendom.

In the first printed Complutensian Polyglot Bible, edited by Cardinal Ximenes and his confreres, the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin are printed in parallel columns, side by side, the Vulgate being in the middle, which the editors seriously compare to the position of Jesus Christ between the two thieves at the Crucifixion. They argued that the Hebrews and Greeks had the Scriptures before the Latins, but they believed that heretical Jews and Greeks had corrupted the manuscripts.* But had not the Latin Church temptations to corrupt the manuscripts? Obviously it had. The book, though evidently not originally written for any such purpose, was its charter of dominion, as much as the forged Isidore Decretals or the spurious Donation of Constantine. The declaration, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," bears every mark of forgery.

The great Bible of Ximenes, the grand inquisitor of Castile and regent of Spain (1514-17), is said to have been founded on texts so precious that they are all lost. The New Testament, edited by Erasmus for Froben of Basel (1516), was professedly based on MSS. of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. For the Revelation he used a manuscript of the twelfth century, which was wanting in parts, which he put into Greek from the Latin Vulgate. Beza had older manuscripts for his edition; but even his oldest and most famous one, Codex D., now at Cambridge, differs totally in many places from the received text, and is both Greek and Latin; the latter, according to Tischendorf, being the original, while Scrivener, who has edited it, is certain that the Greek is the original of the Latin.†

* Ximenes "insisted that the Scriptures should be preserved within the three languages in which, by the order of God, the inscriptions at the head of Christ's Cross were written, urging that the common people despise what they understand, but venerate what is hidden from them and beyond their reach, and that wicked persons would bring the Catholic Church low whenever the Bible should be spread among the people in a form intelligible to them."—*McClintock and Strong's "Cyclopaedia"; article, "Ximenes."*

† The Rev. J. Black, in his *Palaeoromaica*, showed that much that is curious in the Greek version of the New Testament could be explained on the supposition of a Latin original.

Erasmus did not at first put in the text of the three witnesses—the only clear text in favor of the Trinity in the Bible; but, being dropped upon for the same, offered to do so if any Greek manuscript were produced containing it. A MS. of his own time of course turned up, and in his third edition the text was inserted.

I contend that, immediately we leave the printed books for the MSS., we are on the ground of conjecture. We have, be it remembered, not a few centuries to fill up, but, in the case even of the New Testament, an interval of considerably over a thousand years. If Erasmus could be deceived by the Codex Montfortianus, there was none in his time who could certainly decide the date of manuscripts pretending to antiquity. Nay, I will go further, and say there is no palæographer who can do so with certainty to-day, despite the advance of the art, and the great increase of materials. For the art of palæography was invented by the Benedictines, and expounded by Dom Montfaucon, Dom Mabillon, and others, with the express purpose of fixing the dates of the productions of their own order.

One little item is suspicious. We know that papyrus was used in Egypt from the earliest times till the ninth century of our era. It was used in France under the Merovingian kings, and in Italy till the eleventh century. But we have no trace of any part of the Bible on papyrus, though there are remains of other literature.* The three oldest MSS. are on vellum. Of these the oldest-looking and the briefest is that of the Vatican Codex B. But its date is purely conjectural. The same may be said of Codex A at the British Museum, and Codex N at St. Petersburg. The only safe date to ascribe to them is the date when they were first made known to the reading world.

LUCIANUS.

FADS, CULTS, AND PHILOSOPHIES.

WITH Theosophy, Spiritualism, and Ethical Culture seeking legal recognition as systems of religion, it becomes necessary that a classification should be attempted, so that a true religious body may be recognised when brought to view. I have no special gift for the business, but will venture to name three schools of thought with the religious diathesis, which, on their merits, should be granted the immunities enjoyed by the popular faiths. They are:—

1. The Fads.
2. The Cults.
3. The Philosophies.

The Fad (1) is a means of mental relaxation or diversion. Examples are: The study, so-called, of the works of Browning, Wordsworth, Whitman, and Omar Khayyam for the purpose of reading into the words of those authors certain ideas which they never thought of in their lives. The Baconian cipherers are faddists, and there are faddists in classes 2 and 3. The devotees meet on week days in one another's homes, but should be invited to occupy the local school-house. The exercise prepares the student to find the evolution theory stated in Genesis, and a solution of the labor question in the words attributed to Jesus Christ.

The adherents of a Cult (2) hire a hall and a stated preacher, adopt a ceremonial, and meet on Sunday. With them morals is substituted for piety, and the attainment of character is alleged as their goal. Happiness is deprecated. Examples are: Ethical Culturists, Positivists, and the Congregation of the Rev. Caroline Bartlett Crane of Kalamazoo. There are Cultists in class 3.

A Philosophy (3) affirms a future life or posits an unknowable, and accepts verification of hypothesis as a foundation for belief. Devotees may or may not be gregarious. Examples are: Spiritualists, who contemplate the unbeliever with a feeling of deep commiseration; and Agnostics, who regard with disdain both those who do and those who do not believe in a future life.

The religious society is exempted, while the Fad, the Cult, and the Philosophy are liable to be taxed because they have not developed a political pull. GEORGE E. MACDONALD.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Religion ignores its immense debt to science, and science is scarcely at all conscious how much religion owes to it.—*Herbert Spencer*.

If the religious spirit be ever mentioned in any historical narration, we are sure to meet afterwards with a detail of the miseries which attend it.—*David Hume*.

* This was written before the discovery of alleged papyrus fragments of the Logia in Egypt. As the force of the objection grows, doubtless more papyri will be providentially discovered,

WHY JUBILATE?

SIXTY years thyself to please;
Sixty years of boundless choice;
Sixty years of golden ease;
But why should *we* rejoice?

Sixty years have brought to thee
Comfort from discomfort wrung—
Toadies hail thy Jubilee
With sycophantic tongue.

Sixty years, through force of Fate,
All thy friends we've kept, and thee
Why should *we*, then, jubilate
At this thy Jubilee?

Sixty years thou'st hoarded spoil,
Piled 'mid sound of workers' sighs—
Woman! think of Starving Toil,
And then apologize!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

PROFESSOR RAMSEY, who occupies the chair of chemistry in University College, London, has been interviewed by the *Christian Commonwealth*. "Scientific investigations," he said, "do not tell against faith. They make people more and more thoughtful. Belief or disbelief in a future life, for instance, is not in any way affected by science—there is no connection between them." Science is not opposed to the doctrine of a future life; on the other hand, science lends it no countenance. Science, in short, has nothing to do with it, one way or the other. Admitting this, it is difficult to see what consolation it affords the "true believers," unless they are thankful for the very smallest mercies.

"The Age of the Earth as an Abode Fitted for Life" was the title of Lord Kelvin's recent lecture at the Victoria Institute. His calculation was that the earth cooled down sufficiently to admit of the existence of life upon its surface about twenty million years ago. Fifteen millions was the lowest estimate, and thirty millions the highest. But suppose we take twenty millions as the most likely figure. What price Moses then? What a flea-bite is the six thousand years of the Bible! And what a farce is the six-days' creation!

Lord Kelvin affects to be what is called "a believer." He said he was almost certain that the earth was either built up of meteorites or brought into existence in a heated state by a creative hand. We suppose the first theory is meant for the scientists, and the second for the theologians. His lordship patronizes both indifferently, and is therefore like the man who told the parson he didn't care where he was going, as he had "friends in both places."

Lord Kelvin had no great consolation to offer the pietists of the Victoria Institute. He restated arguments used thirty years ago, and seems much where he was then. He said: "The latest geological estimate of the time required for the formation of all strata since the beginning of the Cambrian rocks was seventeen million years, and he could scarcely be described merely as a malicious physicist trying to curb the aspirations of the biologists when he said that this earth could not have been a habitable globe for more than thirty million years." The period will probably be found to suffice for the development of organisms, irrespective of the hypothesis which Lord Kelvin put forward, when Sir William Thompson, that life may have come to this earth from other worlds by means of aerolites.

The President of the Wesleyan Conference attended the funeral of the veteran temperance advocate, Dr. F. R. Lees, with the intention of delivering a short address at the grave. He was not permitted to do so, because permission had not been obtained from the vicar of Meanwood. The *Daily News* remarked: "When working men refuse to work with 'knobsticks' they are liable to be preached to death by every curate in the country, tame and wild. But what is their selfishness compared with that of the clergy of the Establishment, who carry the war of trade privilege into the enemy's graves?"

Judgments from God are dropping out of fashion. They now seem to come from another quarter. Thus the Rev. Peter Prescott, Chaplain to the City of London Union Infirmary, fell dead while taking part in the service at St. Paul's Church, St. Stephen's-road, Old Ford. The reverend gentleman had been invited to preach at the evening service,

when the painful event took place in full view of the congregation.

George Paterson, who was executed at Glasgow for the murder of his paramour, was reported to have shown a wonderful change when informed that his life would not be spared. Before he was restless, but afterwards he prayed fervently and found peace. He was calm and confident of blessed change, and was closely attended by the Rev. Mr. Alexander, the Protestant chaplain, who confirmed his hopes of salvation. A cosy celestial corner was doubtless found for him when he was jerked to Jesus.

A large portion of the time of the General Assembly of the State Church in Scotland has this year been taken up with considering charges made against certain of the clergy. The Rev. Charles R. H. Gordon, of St. Andrew's parish, Lhanbryd, was deposed from the ministry, which he has adorned for thirty-five years, for drunkenness, and for having been an habitual swearer. He was also charged with indecent conduct towards his servant girls, whom he invited into the manse parlor and plied with whisky. Insanity was pleaded on his behalf, but the Assembly put aside that plea and pronounced sentence of deposition from the ministry.

In what is known as the Carnoch case, the Rev. John Macdougall was found "Guilty" of being an "insufficient, negligent, and scandalous minister." Macdougall has led a nice easy life for the last twenty years. His congregation consisted of himself and his sister, but on one occasion as many as six persons had the benefit of his ministrations. Sometimes his church was not open at all; the bell was seldom rung; there was no Sunday-school, and he held aloof from those who were supposed to be his parishioners. For having rendered his ministry contemptible, and brought scandal on his sacred profession, he was only suspended *sine die*, which means that the man may again be a minister and draw State pay.—*Reynolds's Newspaper*.

At a meeting in connection with the Church of England Foreign Missionary Society, held at Perry Barr last night, the Rev. G. Tovey, who has just returned from British Columbia, said that there was a large floating population on the Pacific Coast whose supreme object was the making of dollars. A type of this large class said to him, "Well, Mr. Tovey, what do you want? We neither want church nor parson here." The Bible might not be read nor religion taught in the schools, and no clergyman or minister of any denomination was allowed by law to sit on the School Board. Two classes were prohibited from participating in the education of the young—viz., clergymen and criminals. This was considered very rough on the clergy; but we doubt not that the people of British Columbia could continue to worry along without either of the classes mentioned.

Efforts to save Theodore Durrant, under sentence of death for killing Blanche Lamont in the Emmanuel Church, San Francisco, two years ago, are being made by accusing the Rev. J. G. Gibson, pastor of the church, of committing the crime. A man has made affidavit that he saw the Rev. Gibson with the woman in his arms on the day of the murder.

The Rev. H. C. White, Presbyterian, of Circleville, Pa., was accused by a young lady of having illicit relations with herself, but the Presbytery vindicated him. Then a brother of the woman got out a warrant for his arrest, and he will be tried in a secular court.

To a Queensland bush parson a daughter was recently born. On his next round he could speak of nothing else, telling everyone "how good the Lord had been" to him, till he came to a station owned by bluff old MacMisery. Here he grew such a bore anent the way the "Lord had blessed him" that Mac at length lost patience. "Look here, Mr. 'X,' if I were you I wouldn't tell people that yarn, but would take a little of the credit myself, instead of giving the Lord all the glory." "X." now looks very hard at you if you ask him how his "blessing" is getting along.

The Rev. G. R. Oaks, of Morningside, Sioux City, has been suspended for ministerial conduct with a servant-girl in the employ of another minister with whom he was staying. He pretended that she acted to him like Potiphar's wife, and that he, like Joseph, repulsed her advances. But a jury of competent Methodist ministers decided he was guilty. He has a wife and three children.

A certain Free Kirk choir, which usually gives a brief mission service in the open air before the evening service in church, got a scare the other Sunday when the parson who was to officiate at the service bounded past on a bicycle. The rev. gentleman rode on to the vestry door, hopped off, and entered to don his vestments, and the choir hardly knew how to look as they walked in procession to the sacred

building. They were, however, gratified to find that they got as good a sermon from the cycling man as they did from the afternoon preacher, who reached the church in a carriage and pair.—*Glasgow Weekly Herald*.

The Rev. Mr. Sammie, a minister in New Jersey, has introduced the phonograph into his church, to repeat prayers, Bible selections, hymns, and the benediction, and says his congregation "are delighted with it."

It was a most audacious thief who stole the stole from the Irish fair, says the New York *Evening Sun*. It was a successful steal and a valuable stole. The vestment was of cloth of gold, and was once worn by Pope Pius IX. It was valued by the owner, a high dignitary in the Roman Catholic Church, at \$3,000, and was one of the chief glories of the Kilkenny booth at the Irish fair now running at the Grand Central Palace, New York. Perhaps the stole was stolen for purposes of devil-worship.

The Rev. David Sessums, D.D., Bishop of the Episcopal Church for the diocese of Louisiana, preached a sermon in the cathedral at New Orleans, which has provoked great indignation among his ministerial brethren, not only in his own, but also in other denominations, it being, as they assert, "a complete surrender of the whole system of grace revealed in the Holy Scriptures."

As per 1896 census, Maoriland (population 700,000) boasts of over 200 sects. There are 61 Christian Israelites, 3 Dippers, 16 Moravians, 2 Puritans, 3 Ranters, and 6 Zwinglians. The Covenanters, United Saints, Christian Freethinkers, Ordinary Christians, Salvation Catholics, Chaldeans, Philadelphians, Chartists, Fatalists, Kalizoists, Universal Hedonists, Truists, and Natalists are each represented by one adherent only. One individual gives his religion as a Freemason, while another with equally hazy ideas on the subject is a Pessimist, and another an Anarchist. The Eclectics and Egoists are each represented by 3 members, while the same number believe in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," whatever that may mean; 8 "Belong to Christ" and 6 "Belong to Jesus"; while 15 are Brethren of the Lord. Six "Know Jesus," and 24 "Belong to the Latter House of Israel"; 6 are "Not yet Saved," 1 "Thinks for Himself," 1 "Has been Born Again," and 18 are Psychic students. Also, 5 are Altruists, 2 Zoroastrians, 2 Cameronians, and 4 are Christians According to the Holy Scriptures.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

The Catholics have arranged to meet the Queen with an address, presented by Cardinal Vaughan and the Duke of Norfolk outside St. George's Cathedral, Southwark. It is expected that Her Majesty will be so tired out by the proceedings outside St. Paul's that she will hurry over the second function very rapidly.

It having been pointed out that the Gospel MSS., if as ancient as pretended, ought to be on papyri instead of vellum, the papyri have providentially been forthcoming. At any rate, as with the famous Sinaitic MS., we are told of a fragment, as a first instalment of the Logia, or sayings of Christ ascribed to Matthew. The report says: "Some of those found in the fragment are not in the Gospels, while others exhibit several divergencies from the text of the parallel passages in the Gospels. It is hoped that when the papyri come to be examined in detail further discoveries of early Christian records will be made." We hope the papyri and the circumstances under which found will be closely investigated by experts. But we have a shrewd suspicion that the forgers are as clever as the experts.

The Suicide's Cemetery at Monte Carlo is tended by an old grave-digger, aged eighty, but still strong and wiry. His name is Gilbert. He has dug all the forty graves there himself. The ground is unhallowed, but the old man doesn't see that it makes any difference. "What matters that (he says)? Do not those who have ended their own lives sleep as soundly here as those in the other place on the hillside below us? I know they do, and the wind whispers just as sweetly through the trees here as there. They are happy and at rest."

The Christian Cyclists' Union has just been formed, with its headquarters at Bristol. Its principal object is to hold services at various country villages during the summer. Evidently the clergy see what a loss to the churches is involved in the fact that so many thousands of young people, to say nothing of their elders, spin away from the cities on Sunday, and turn their backs on the blessed House of God. Whether they will be able to catch the runaways in the villages remains to be seen. Meanwhile, we ask the dear, good Christians to picture Jesus Christ and the twelve Apostles on bicycles. Our own imagination shrinks aghast at the idea.

Parson Leeper, preaching at St. Peter's Church, Plymouth,

said he had no objection whatever to bicycling on Sunday, provided the riders made it a point of devoting a portion of the day to Church duties. Probably the bicyclists don't care whether he has any objection or not. Anyhow, it is easy to see the reverend gentleman's professional anxiety. "Spin along on the Lord's Day as much as you like—that is, if you must; but for God's sake go to church in the morning, afternoon, or evening, or we shall have to shut up shop. Live and let live! That's the motto."

June 17 is Corpus Christi Day, fixed as the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday. This purely Roman festival is much coming into use in the Church of England. It was only instituted in the thirteenth century in commemoration of a miracle alleged to have happened at Bolsena in 1263. A priest of the name of Peter, it is said, was troubled with some doubts as to whether the consecrated bread really represented the flesh, bone, nerves, blood, and divinity of J. C. He was convinced; for, fracturing a portion of the Holy Host in his hands, it became actual living flesh and blood, which stained the linen and took the definite shape of J. C.'s wounded head. Drops of blood, too, fell on the pavement, and can still be seen, for a consideration, in the church at Bolsena. The bloodstained linen was sent to Pope Urban IV., then at Orvieto with his court, and can still be seen there, in a shrine of pure silver, also for a consideration. The Pope thereupon instituted the festival and procession of Corpus Christi.

Such is the Christian story. Now for the rationalistic explanation. From of old, an ancient summer festival celebrated the triumph of Bacchus, Dionysus, or some other of the many-named spirits of vegetation and sun-god which develops life, and, above all, produces the corn and the wine. Dances and revels took place in his honor. The god's body was borne in procession, and was fabled to produce these fruits of the earth. The carrying of the sacrament to the fields and praying for harvest is a relic of such festivals. *Corpo di Bacco* (Body of Bacchus) is still a favorite oath in Italy, and is equivalent to our Zounds for God's wounds.

The Bull was sacrificed to Bacchus as to Mithra, and by its blood came salvation—i.e., the corn and wine. But, as Zagreus, Dionysus was himself torn to pieces, his blood being given for the life of men. This is represented in statuary by his hair and beard breaking out into vine leaves and grapes. Bacchus thus, either in person or by representative, died periodically, descended into the underworld, to rise from the dead in spring and triumph in the summer. This festival on Holy Thursday was of old the time for plays and mummers, to extinguish which the Church substituted the procession of the Holy Host and the story of the miracle. If this explanation is correct, it implies that Paganism was not quite overcome even in the thirteenth century, and there is indeed reason to suppose that the witches' Sabbath kept up the worship of Dionysus Sabazius to a still later period.

In the Presbyterian Assembly at Charlotte, North Carolina, the Committee on Bills and Overtures recommended that women be forbidden the use of pulpits for public addresses to mixed audiences, and that it be pronounced improper to give notices of such meetings.

The Rev. Dr. Washington Gladden, in a discourse on the Scriptural book of Esther, declared he was unable to regard the writer of it as inspired by God, or to believe that the teachings of the book could have been approved by Christ. As a history, he said of the book, he very much doubted whether the events related in it ever took place.

The religion of one age is the insanity of another. The will of Warren Hawkins, late of Eastport, U.S.A., is being contested on the ground that he believed in witchcraft. A century ago John Wesley said with truth that giving up belief in witchcraft was in effect giving up belief in the Bible. Now to believe in it is considered evidence of insanity by Christians who pretend to believe in the casting-out of devils by their Savior.

Professor Oberhammer declares that the "hooked nose" is not the pure Semitic type. This type of nose is shown on the old Chaldean sculptures of Tello and Nippur, that belong to the period between 2000 and 3000 B.C. Professor Oberhammer ascribes it to the ancient Anatolians, who were the aborigines of Armenia at the time when that territory was first invaded by the Aryans. To the same stock belonged the Elamites and the Susians of the South, who, by inter-marriage with the Semitic race, in the Professor's opinion, impressed upon them their physical type.

The *Scotsman*, noticing in a leader the suspension of the Rev. Mr. Robinson, of Kilmun, remarks: "If the Church, now that it has resumed heresy-hunting, does not make heavier bags in future seasons, it will not be from any lack

of heretics in her covers. Such, at least, is the report made by men who have been over the ground and communicated their observations to yesterday's Assembly. One of them, without any sign of dissent from his hearers, expressed the conviction that there were few members of the House who had signed the Confession of Faith with the absolute and literary acceptance of every jot and tittle.' So that, judged by the strict standard of the seventeenth century, all, or nearly all, in the Assembly are themselves heretics, more or less.

This is a long paragraph, but it comes from George Macdonald of the *Truthseeker*, whose sufferings will evoke commiseration on this side of the Atlantic. He says:—"Frederick de Latour Booth-Tucker, commander of the Salvation Army, has been presented to the grand jury of this county, and indicted for maintaining a public nuisance. I desire to help the good work along by indicting his brother-in-law, Ballington Booth, commander of God's American Volunteers. Ballington's rabble, as I have said before, congregates nightly in a hall abutting on the premises which I occupy. In formal language I may say that: On April 11, in the present year of Grace and the subscriber, and all days since, and for a considerable time back, this yer Ballington Booth did most industriously and inappropriately keep and maintain a certain common, ornery, misbegotten, and disorderly joint, the same being a place of public resort; and in this said place of public resort whole rafts of cyclocephalous persons of all sexes, to the number of two hundred and upward, with wheels and lungs for two thousand, do frequent and come together daily and nightly; and that the said Ballington Booth does cause, procure, suffer, and permit the said sexes in the said joint, now and from away back, at unreasonable hours, and at all hours of the night, to be and remain, singing, shouting, playing musical and unmusical instruments, making a hell of a noise, and otherwise conducting themselves like lunatics in Ward No. 1 of Bellevue Hospital. By reason whereof the undersigned, a citizen of the State and there inhabiting, abiding, and suffering, has been, and bergod he is yet, annoyed and injured in his nerves and other vital organs; his comfort and repose, and the peace and comfort of his wife, and the prospects of his infant son, whose grievance against the said disorderly place began as far back as the troubles of Tristram Shandy, being thereby harassed, and the said subscriber being provoked to the use of language prejudicial to his future welfare, against the statute in such case made and provided, and against reason, horse sense, and the dictates of common decency."

Haji Riazuddin Ahmad, who is general secretary to the Society for the Propagation of Islam, writes from Barilly, North West Provinces, India, calling attention to the attitude of church-going Christians in India, which unmistakably shows their indifference to, if not unbelief in, their religion.

A defence of endowed churches was made by the Rev. Dr. Rainsford, of New York. "Let me tell you," were his words, "it is not easy for a man to speak freely and fearlessly from the pulpit when he knows that two or three rich men in his congregation hold the whole parish by the throat." This outspoken language throws light on the relations of pulpit and pew.

The Catholic poet, F. Thompson, is a poet, but he sometimes drops into slush. Thus he writes:—

At all gates the clangours gurgo in,
God's paludament lightens, see!

When a poet or any other person begins to write of God it is usually a sign, not of force of imagination, but of lack of clear ideas. So Mr. Thompson tells us "the world's unfolded blossom smells of God," "Soul fully blest, to feel God whistle thee at heel." These may tickle the sense of the ridiculous, but "God's paludament" is a distinct acquisition to the theological armoury.

The dear old doctrine of the Trinity has given rise to a deal of nonsense. The *Daily News* informs us that in the music of Dr. Martin's *Te Deum*, which is to be used at the Jubilee Thanksgiving, the adoption almost throughout of triple time is intended as an indication of the doctrine of the Trinity. After this, we shall not be surprised to learn that the polka step is danced in honor of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Zambaan is a gentleman of intuition. He says he does not want to go to heaven, because he guesses that there the white man will rule the roost even more completely than on earth. His country contains five missionaries and an archdeacon; therefore the nigger's misimpression is somewhat curious. Perhaps the *Church Times* can explain this?—*African Critic*.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 13, Bristol-street Board School, Birmingham—three lectures; 15, Aston; 16, Handsworth. August 15, New Brompton.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

A. E. W.—In cur next.

A. WHATMAN.—Your surmise is correct to a certain degree. When the Inquisition was established any person suspected of heresy could be seized, imprisoned, and tortured, without so much as being told of what he was accused. The practice was to make him confess something in the midst of his agony. And all this was done in the name of religion.

MR. G. J. HOLYOAKE writes to Mr. Wheeler with regard to his first instalment of "Sixty Years of Freethought": "Your paper is very spirited, timely, and useful." Mr. Holyoake gives some information which Mr. Wheeler hopes to embody in a future publication on the subject.

SCHOOLMASTER.—(1) The speaker had a fine Christian imagination. *Bible Contradictions* was not compiled by Mr. Foote, but by him and Mr. Ball, and the latter did most of the work, as is honestly stated in the Preface. As a compilation it is entirely original. The texts were all cut out of sundry Bibles, to prevent mistakes in transcription. Certainly it was not first published by some American Spiritualists, unless this is an age of miracles; nor was it ever issued without the compilers' names. (2) The book you refer to is probably *The Non-Christian Cross*, by J. D. Parsons, published by Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., price 4s.

W. G. HANFORD.—Your letter, being marked lecture notice, was opened by Mr. Wheeler. It stands over until Mr. Foote's return.

H. H.—Read Farrer's *Christianity and Paganism*.

MISS VANCE, 376 Strand, will inform applicants of the terms for seats to view the Jubilee procession.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Isle of Man Times—People's Newspaper—Two Worlds—Truthseeker—New York Public Opinion—Boston Investigator—Crescent—Islamic World—Progressive Thinker—Birmingham Argus—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Figaro—Daylight—Liberator—Secular Thought—Humanity.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 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.O.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 23 Stonecutter-street, London, E.O.

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.

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.

SPECIAL.

IN next week's *Freethinker* I shall write at some length on my re-election as President of the National Secular Society, and on the immediate future of our party and its organization. Meanwhile I am enjoying a few days' much-needed rest and change at the seaside. This will account for the postponement of answers to correspondents.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. C. WATTS, fresh from the Conference, visits Birmingham and suburbs for three days. On Sunday he occupies the platform at the Bristol-street Board School—in the morning his subject being "The Christian's New Bible"; in the afternoon, "The Sequel of the Cross"; and in the evening, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb." On Monday Mr. Watts lectures at the Albert-road School, Aston, on "Unbelief Justified"; and on Tuesday, at the Wattville-street School, Handsworth, he delivers "A Plea for Secular Education." Our friends in Birmingham should make this the occasion of a rally in the various districts visited. Mr. Watts was in capital form at the Conference, and as fresh and vigorous as in the days of yore.

The platform at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-

road, will this evening be taken by Mr. F. Verinder, the well-known secretary of the Land Restoration League. He will supplement his previous lecture on the Blasphemy Laws by one entitled "The English Inquisition," in which he will deal with the history of common law prosecutions for blasphemy and heresy, and will show the essential identity of the English Blasphemy Laws with the law against heretics as administered by the "Holy Inquisition," and codified in the famous *Tractatus de Hæresi* of Prospero Farinacci. Those of our friends who have heard Mr. Verinder should swell his audience, and those who have not yet heard him should take this opportunity. Mr. Verinder deals with the subjects he takes up in a thorough, and at the same time lively, manner.

Our brave colleague, Mr. Joseph Symes, in the last number of his *Liberator* to hand from Melbourne, announces that his health, unless he is mistaken, is now fully restored. In spite of all his hard difficulties and grievous misfortunes, he is still full of fight. Robbed of the hall he practically built, assailed by a most malignant combination of enemies, and ill-supported by his professed friends, he is neither "crushed, stopped, nor disheartened." Apparently he cannot even get a place to lecture in, but he still keeps the *Liberator* flag floating, and does battle under it with superstition, priestcraft, and tyranny.

The good old *Boston Investigator* reprints our "Sugar Plum" on its having attained its sixty-seventh year, and adds: "We thank our esteemed contemporary for the above expression of its good wishes for the *Investigator*, and hope that they will be fully realized. It is indeed true that we have had many difficulties to encounter from combined bigotry and hypocrisy, as well as from other sources; but by constant diligence we have succeeded in publishing this paper until the present time, and we hope to continue in our work so long as Christian superstition dominates the minds of the people."

Our veteran Freethought contemporary regards the sheep-like voting of the Catholics in the United States as a menace to public liberty. It says, and the passage is quoted in New York *Public Opinion*: "When we remember the immense expenditure of blood and of treasure by which freedom from British oppression was obtained by our forefathers for themselves and for their posterity, we ought firmly to resolve that, at all hazards, not only our public school system, but also our civil and religious liberty, must, and shall, be preserved. In order that this desirable object may be accomplished, we consider it the duty of all true liberals to oppose the election of Catholics to any public office in which the power thereof can be used to promote the cause of Catholicism, or to jeopardise the rights and the liberty of American citizens."

Daylight, of Norwich, which has the distinction of being one of the most liberal and fearless of the provincial weekly organs, admits many letters from heretics. J. H. and W. P. Hainsbey write in the number for June 5 on "The Inspiration of the Bible," but it is doubtful if the orthodox will fairly toe the line.

Mr. F. J. Gould has put forward a circular entitled "A Plan of Moral Instruction," designed to supersede the present method of religious instruction now practised in public elementary schools. Mr. Gould has evidently long considered the subject, which he deals with in sections under such headings as "Self-respect, Self-control, Self-help"; "Truth and Truthfulness"; "Kindness"; "Work, Duty, and Honor"; "Habits"; "Mutual Dependence"; "Justice"; "The Work of the State and the Citizen"; "Co-operation and Peace"; "Study of Nature, Study of Art, Play," etc. It may be a question how far morality, which essentially depends on sympathy and example, can be inculcated by school teaching; but Mr. Gould's views are certainly deserving of the attention of all interested in the subject, and he invites communications from them to him at 12 Meynell-road, Hackney-common.

"The Ethical World" Publishing Company, Limited, has been projected in the interest of the Ethical Movement. Dr. Stanton Coit and Mr. F. J. Gould are on the directorate. The capital is £2,000, in shares of £5 each. The registered office of the Company is at 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C., and the secretary is Mr. C. T. Gorham.

Mr. Joseph Symes observes in his *Liberator* that "Odericus Vitalis, or Oderic Vital, a monkish writer of the eleventh century, in his *Ecclesiastical History* remarks that the 'twelve apostles represent the hours of the day, and the twelve months of the entire year.....They now sit together on celestial thrones, the righteous judges of the twelve tribes of Israel.....now they shine as his (Christ's) blessed co-heirs in heaven' (vol. i., p. 81, Bohn's ed.). This language," Mr. Symes says, "is an echo, or more than an echo, of the old religion when sun, moon, zodiacal signs, etc.,

were the gods more or less consciously worshipped. That Christ is the sun, his disciples or apostles the twelve signs of the zodiac, I am not able to doubt. The rest of the gospel and of theology is mere padding or stuff invented to deceive the people by making them think of Christ and Co. as a set of men, and yet much more than men. The confusion of theology, the mixture of human and divine, as it is generally called, the sudden transition from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth, in itself shows that not history, but myth, lies at the base of Christianity."

The Glasgow and Clyde coast anti-Sabbatarians have been chuckling over the reply of Angus Campbell, the legal director of the Sunday Steamer Company, who was addressed by a correspondent asking a number of questions about Sabbath sailing, and winding up with an appeal to the Bible. Mr. Campbell answered the questions *seriatim*, and concluded by the advice that the law of the land should not be ignored in favor of what some are pleased to call the law of God. He adds: "My fee, which I modify, for this opinion is £1 ls., which kindly remit."

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE.

OUR Leicester friends, who placed their hall and rooms at the disposal of the N. S. S. for its Conference, had done everything possible for the convenience and comfort of the delegates. The whole of the arrangements were admirably carried out. Over the platform of their fine hall were large portraits of Josiah Gimson (the founder of the Institute), of T. Slater (a Vice-President of the N. S. S., who was connected with Leicester during the latter portion of his life), and of G. J. Holyoake and C. Bradlaugh.

There was a fair attendance of delegates, the following towns being represented:—Bethnal Green, Mr. Cohen; Bolton, W. Collins and J. Shufflebotham; Birmingham, R. Taylor and S. Armfield; Bath, J. Withy; Bristol, Mr. Hawker and J. Watts Treasure; Barnsley, W. Dyson and Thomas Wombwell; Blackburn, W. Ashworth and J. Titherington; Bradford, J. Sunderland and W. Key; Camberwell, F. Cotterell; Chatham, F. Swan and F. J. Boorman; Carlton and Netherfield, J. Bell; Derby, W. H. Whitney and H. M. Guinness; East London, R. Forder; Edinburgh, J. Brown; Finsbury, E. Bater; Glasgow, T. McLeish and Donald Black; Huddersfield, W. H. Spivey and T. Ollernah; Liverpool, L. Small and J. Hammond; Leeds, R. Rockett and J. Taylor; Manchester, Mr. and Mrs. Pegg and S. L. Hurst; North-West London, Miss A. Brown; Pontypridd, F. Martin; Plymouth, R. Smith and C. Watts; Rochdale, R. Thompson; Stanningly, J. W. Gott; South Shields, Messrs. Horsman and Chapman; West London, R. P. Edwards and B. T. Munton.

The Vice-Presidents who were present included Mr. E. Bater, Mr. C. Cohen, Mr. R. Forder, Mr. S. Hartmann, Mr. W. Heaford, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. C. Pegg, Miss Vance, Mr. C. Watts, and Mr. J. M. Wheeler. Our veterans, Messrs. Truelove and Umpleby, were unavoidably absent.

Among the number of well-known friends of the cause who were present were Miss E. Robins, Mr. and Mrs. Ward, and Mr. T. Shore, of London; Mr. Christopher, of Wolverhampton; Mr. Greevz Fisher, of Leeds; Messrs. C. H. Cattell, Bullows, Hodgkins, and Wood, and Mrs. Armfield, of Birmingham; Messrs. Swain, Gott, and Heritage, of Derby; Mr. Ashwood, of Blackburn; Mr. Leaper, of Nottingham; T. Taylor, of Leeds; and others.

THE PRESIDENT, having briefly opened the business, and the minutes of the last Conference having been taken as read, after the calling of the roll proceeded to read the Annual Report of the Executive, as under:—

Your Executive regrets to have to open its fresh Annual Report with a note of sadness. During the past year death has been busy with the list of vice-presidents. Mr. S. P. Putnam, who visited this country two years ago, and made friends everywhere he went by his genial character, was elected a vice-president of the National Secular Society at the Bristol Conference. He accepted the election as a mark of sympathy between the Secular movement in England and that in America. It was hoped at the time that this fraternal attachment would long continue; but unfortunately Mr. Putnam died at Boston in the month of December last. His death is sincerely regretted by his friends on this side of the Atlantic; on the other side it is felt as a terrible blow to the Freethought cause, particularly from the point of view of its organization. Another death to be deplored is that of Mr. J. Brumage. This brave soldier of Freethought fought its battles for many years at Portsmouth. He was a main pillar of the local Branch, and he represented Secular Education on the local School Board. On leaving Portsmouth he settled for a time in London, and was an active worker there. Considerations of health dictated his subsequent removal to Hastings, where he died in the early part

of this year. Still more recently, the Society has lost a vice-president by the death of Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham. Mr. Baker was always a generous friend of Secularism, and his high character, which commanded universal respect, threw lustre upon the movement in his native city. Had the state of the law been different, your President is able to say that the National Secular Society would have been handsomely remembered in Mr. Baker's will; in fact, it would ultimately have had the disposition of the larger part of his estate. This emphasizes the grave character of the legal disabilities which Secularism labors under, and points to the immediate necessity of the incorporation scheme which the President will introduce in the course of this Conference.

During the past year the propagandist work of the Society has been carried on under considerable difficulty in several places, owing to the refusal of the proprietors and lessees of halls to let them for Sunday lectures with a charge for admission. This is partly a consequence of the alarm raised by the prosecution of the Sunday Society at Leeds, and partly a consequence of the bigotry of some police authorities who exercise a secret and illicit power over the conduct of premises that are licensed for public entertainments. This difficulty obtains in London as well as in some provincial towns.

On the whole, however, it must be recorded that the propagandist work has been fairly maintained. There are three lecture halls regularly open on Sunday evenings in London, and during the summer the open-air lecturing is carried on with vigor and success at many stations in the parks and other public places. Last summer several Freethought demonstrations were organized, and addresses by Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Cohen were delivered to vast concourses of people. Messrs. Moss and Heaford, two of your Society's vice-presidents, are always very active in this outdoor work, sometimes addressing two or three meetings in the course of a single Sunday.

The open-air propaganda has been carried on in a few provincial towns, but it is not general among the Branches. The Executive is of opinion that more of them should attempt it during the summer months. With regard to the indoor propaganda, the Executive is pleased to notice its activity in south-west Scotland and south Lancashire. A considerable number of meetings have been held under the President's Lecture Scheme with gratifying results. In nearly all cases the admission has been free, and the collection has been taken to assist in defraying the local expenses.

The Executive takes this opportunity of correcting certain misapprehensions which appear to prevail with respect to this Lecture Scheme. When it was first projected by the President, the Executive resolved that, so far as itself was concerned, he should have a free hand, and at the same time receive any support it could render. The President stated the case clearly at the last Conference; moreover, a resolution on the Agenda, to the effect that the President should be asked to transfer the Scheme to the Executive, found only two supporters. In these circumstances, it seems to the Executive most unfortunate—to use no stronger word—that the President should be harassed and misrepresented in regard to the Lecture Scheme. It has been *his* Scheme all along; he has had full control and full responsibility; and, according to reports, it has materially assisted the Society's propaganda. The President has several times intimated that he is more than ready to let the Scheme be operated by the Society itself, whenever it is able and willing to do so. Meanwhile it is unreasonable for those who shrink from the responsibility to cavil at one who undertakes it.

Another matter must be referred to by the Executive in this connection. Notwithstanding the monthly audit of the Society's accounts by two members of the Executive, and yearly audit by two persons elected by the Conference, all sorts of ridiculous rumors were floated as to the Society's finances. In order to counteract these rumors, the Executive determined to resuscitate (with the President's consent) the treasurership which was abolished at the Hanley Conference. Mr. S. Hartmann accepted the treasurership, and the Executive proposes his re-election at this Conference. No doubt the action of the Executive in this matter will be endorsed, and the Conference will presently have an opportunity of considering a large scheme for the financial and organic improvement of the Society, which Mr. Hartmann has already submitted to the Executive, and which it thinks is deserving of the most serious consideration.

It is perfectly clear that the financial basis of the Society is unsatisfactory, and it is curious that among all the proposals introduced at various Conferences there has never been one for raising adequate funds for the Society's objects. The Executive has always been hampered by want of means, and has often had to depend on the special efforts of the President. This condition of affairs ought not to be continued, and the Executive hopes that this Conference will inaugurate a new departure.

In accordance with a resolution of the last Conference, the Executive has secured a suitable central office for the

Society at 377 Strand. In the present state of the Society's finances this is a serious undertaking, and the President is responsible for the rent of the office, being, in fact, the legal tenant by agreement with the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, who is the responsible tenant of the whole floor on behalf of the Land Restoration League. The office, however, is in an excellent position, and ought to be a useful and profitable centre in the immediate future, if only the Society has the energy and courage to adjust its finances to its intentions.

The balance-sheet shows a deficit, which would have been much larger if the Annual Dinner in London, besides being highly successful in other ways, had not resulted in a considerable accession to the Society's revenue. The National Secular Society is not the only body in this position, and the Executive ventures to suggest that weeping over misfortunes is not the way to remove them.

Unfortunately, a sum of nearly £40, which should be available for your Society, is locked up in the Birkbeck Bank. It consists of the major part of the balance of the old Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, which had been directed by the subscribers to be held over until it was seen whether the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company would come to anything. When that Company had been wound up, your Executive, which had always retained control over the Fund, decided to communicate with those subscribers for the last time. Those who wished their money returned were asked to say so; and it was stated that, at the end of three months, the whole amount as to which no directions were received would be paid over to the National Secular Society, with which the name of Charles Bradlaugh was so intimately associated. In due course the Executive resolved that the whole amount of the balance at the Birkbeck Bank should be withdrawn and placed in the hands of Messrs. Hartmann and Forder, who should return the subscriptions asked for by the donors, and pay over the remainder to your Society's treasurer. To withdraw the money from the Bank three signatures were necessary—those of G. W. Foote, George Anderson, and W. H. Reynolds. The last gentleman, however, refused to sign the withdrawal form. No reason is assigned; he merely declines. It is true that he has no sort of moral right in the matter. He was appointed by your Executive like the other trustees, and in accepting the appointment he acknowledged the authority of those who appointed him. Still, the Bank cannot act without his signature; and the case is another illustration of the necessity for establishing Secularism on a legal basis.

It is gratifying to note that the Almanack for 1897 has yielded a profit. This is chiefly owing to the large number of advertisements obtained for it by Miss Vance. The editors and contributors have, as usual, given their services gratuitously, the major part of the work devolving upon Mr. J. M. Wheeler, whose modesty must not prevent an expression of the Executive's gratitude.

Mr. Wheeler also co-operated with the President in preparing the Society's manifesto against the Voluntary Schools Bill, which is a fresh endowment of religion under the pretence of improving education. This manifesto was quoted in several newspapers, and reproduced *in extenso* by the *Glasgow Herald*, which is one of the most important journals in Scotland. Copies of the manifesto were also sent to members of Parliament, to members of the London School Board, and in other directions where it might prove useful. The Executive did not suppose it would affect the fate of the Voluntary Schools Bill, which commanded an overwhelming and mechanical majority in the present reactionary House of Commons; but it was thought advisable that the voice of the National Secular Society should be raised against that iniquitous measure, and that its real character should not be absolutely lost sight of in the hubbub of controversy between the rival parties of Church and Dissent.

Mr. George Anderson presented the Society with fifty thousand useful tracts, two of them written by Mr. Charles Watts. A considerable number have been distributed, but the Secretary has a good supply still on hand, and will be happy to send them to Branches or other applicants.

During the past year, in accordance with a resolution of the last Conference, your President and Mr. Charles Watts have visited America, where they represented your Society at the Chicago Freethought Convention, and addressed meetings at New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Brooklyn, Grand Rapids, and Scranton. They also attended the Conference of the Canadian Secular Union at Toronto, where they addressed large and sympathetic meetings in the Auditorium. The reception accorded to your representatives at New York, in Chickering Hall, was graced by the presence of Colonel Ingersoll, who welcomed them heartily in a speech of fascinating eloquence. Before leaving New York, your delegates obtained from Colonel Ingersoll a definite promise that he would visit the Freethinkers of Great Britain. That he will come is beyond a doubt. But those who are impatient to see him here must recollect that he is a very busy man, that he has public engagements far in advance, and that he cannot pack up his portmanteau and cross the Atlantic at a few days'

notice. When he does come he will receive an enthusiastic welcome, not only from the Freethinkers who love him most, but also from a multitude of liberal-minded outsiders with whom his name is always popular. It is probable, too, that a host of Christians would go to see and hear the man who is so detested by the clergy in America, and who is reported by one of them to have a million followers in the United States.

It is the custom, in this Annual Report, to cast a glance at the Freethought movement in other lands. The Executive is happy to learn that Mr. Joseph Symes, one of the Society's vice-presidents at Melbourne, has recovered from his severe illness, and is once more active with voice and pen. He seems however, to be working amid many and great difficulties. His journal, the *Liberator*, is conducted as vigorously as ever. No fresh news has arrived respecting Mr. W. W. Collins from New Zealand, nor of Mr. Wallace Nelson. There is some Freethought activity in South Africa, which offers a fine field for Secular propaganda. Freethought is reported to be making rapid progress in Japan. There is little fresh news from India. On the continent of Europe there are many signs of progress in France, Italy, Spain, Holland, and Belgium. In Germany and Russia, which are governed so despotically, Freethought is unable to have a pronounced organization. In America there is a lull in the work of Freethought organization in the Eastern States, in consequence of the death of Mr. Putnam. Out in the West, however, there appears to be progress among the Secular Churches in Oregon. These bodies are incorporated under the State laws. Colonel Ingersoll, having fully recovered from his illness, has been very active of late in the lecture field, and has addressed very large and enthusiastic audiences. His public reappearance has stirred up the Churches again, and the clergy are everywhere giving their views on the Bible for publication in the newspapers. Preachers like Dr. Lyman Abbott, Ward Beecher's successor at Plymouth Church, are reported to be causing much merriment by their criticism of such inspired stories as that of Jonah and the whale. There, as here, Freethought is permeating the minds of the people. What is called the Higher Criticism is really a sign of the triumph of scepticism. Up to a certain point it has to be recognised even within the Churches. Dean Farrar's latest work on the Bible shows that the old traditional views are seen to be no longer tenable. The Bible has to be rehabilitated, Christianity has to be defended with new weapons. All this proves the great effectiveness of Freethought criticism during the past fifty years. What is now wanted is a re-adjustment of organized Freethought to the new conditions of controversy. Faith changes its standing-ground and its tactics, and Reason must do the same. With a closer and firmer organization, a more regular and consistent discipline, a fresh impulse of social inspiration, and a steady perception of the political, social, and ethical points where the natural and supernatural theories of life come into logical and irreconcilable hostility; with all this, and a superadded sense of what Thomas Paine meant when he coined the phrase, "The Religion of Humanity," there is no reason why the past victories of Secularism should not be eclipsed by far greater victories in the future.

Mr. CHAPMAN moved the adoption of the Report, which was seconded by Mr. SUNDERLAND, and carried. Mr. BLACK moved, and Mr. TITHERINGTON seconded, that the Report be printed, which, after some brief discussion on finances, was carried. Mr. FISHER thought its appearance in the *Freethinker* was sufficient.

Mr. SMALL, on behalf of the Liverpool Branch, moved the suspension of the standing orders for the purpose of placing upon the Agenda, as 4a and 5a, resolutions of the Liverpool, Manchester, and Bradford Branches, which had been excluded by the Executive. A prolonged discussion ensued, and eventually the motion was carried.

Mr. FOOTE then entered into a personal explanation with regard to statements that were maliciously circulated concerning him by persons who could not conceal their hatred to the National Secular Society. Mr. Foote argued that he had no sort of responsibility to persons outside the Society for his actions as President. He was responsible only to the Society, and only to it for what he did in his official capacity. He had waited patiently for the Conference, because he held that there was a constitutional way of making complaints and obtaining redress, and it was not dignified for the President to engage in public controversies with anybody and everybody who chose to challenge or insult him. Questions affecting the Society ought always to be raised *inside* first. Those who had not the sense or courage to do this, but went outside and appealed to the general public on Society matters, however well-intentioned they might be, were really traitors to the Secular cause. Had he imitated this bad example, and hit out all round at those who had assailed him, either openly or clandestinely, it would have been very lively reading. But this would hardly conduce to the dignity or welfare of the Society. Mr. Foote then dealt with the allegations that had been circulated. He concluded by saying that if his explanations were not satisfactory, he would defend his reputation more publicly, and perhaps with

less regard for any interests but his own; but he did not wish to enter upon such a course unless he was obliged. In any case, he would not hand over the defence of his reputation to other hands. On that point his determination was unalterable.

Mr. SMALL then brought forward a resolution of the Liverpool Branch in favor of the appointment of a Committee, to sit in the Midlands; and upon an inquiry whether the motion should appear as sent in to Miss Vance a discussion ensued, and it was eventually agreed to take the motions of Liverpool and Manchester as one, in the form as printed on a joint "appeal" which had been issued.

By this time it was necessary to adjourn for the lunch which had been provided at the Wellington Hotel at the expense of Mr. George Anderson, whose health was toasted with honors.

Upon the re-assembling of the Conference in the afternoon, Mr. A. B. MOSS moved, and Mr. HEAFORD seconded, "That the hearty thanks of this Conference of the National Secular Society be given to the Leicester Secularists for the kindness and courtesy shown in their reception."

Mr. GIMSON, the president, on behalf of the Secular Society, said it had been a great pleasure to meet so many friends. They had in Derby an example of the bigotry which stood in the way of Freethought. They in Leicester were proud of their hall, and proud to show it to those from other parts. This sort of institution ought to exist in every town. They were all working towards the same end, and the best way in which they could be thanked was in working for the cause they had at heart.

Mr. PINDER, the secretary, said that all that had been done had been a labor of love for the grand old cause. No man had been better served than he by his sub-committee, and if the cause were helped they were amply thanked and gratified.

The motion of the Liverpool and Manchester Branches in favour of appointing a Committee of Inquiry, which had been added to the Agenda, was then introduced by Mr. HAMMOND, seconded by Mr. SWAN, and supported by Mr. PEGG, all of whom disclaimed any animus. Mr. C. COHEN moved an amendment to the effect that the Conference declined to appoint a Committee to investigate outside allegations against any officer of the Society. If any member made charges and took the responsibility of maintaining them, it would be a different thing. Mr. BLACK (Glasgow), in supporting the amendment, detailed the experiences at Glasgow, which had resulted in the retirement of one member and the satisfaction of all the rest. Mr. WATTS spoke strongly in favor of the amendment, and declared that the President had been attacked in a most cowardly manner. Mr. A. B. MOSS and Mr. FISHER spoke to much the same effect, deprecating jealousy and suspicion. On the vote being taken, the resolution was lost, the amendment being carried by a large majority.

Mr. HARTMANN, the treasurer, in presenting the financial report, said that a Society such as ours should not have to rely upon the present methods, which resulted in suffering from a chronic disease of want of financial support. All their troubles arose from this one cause. In his opinion, they had had a mere sweating system for the workers, including the President and the lecturers. What he wanted was, that the Society should have an assured income of (say, modestly) £1,500 to provide for the employment of these and of a financial secretary, and for the promotion of Freethought by circulation of literature, and in other ways. He thought there should be one or two who had the cause at heart sufficiently to guarantee (say) £100, another one or two who would offer £50, still more £20 and £10 and £5, while there should be many who would put down £1 yearly as their minimum subscription for the purposes of promoting Freethought throughout the country. He thought, too, that the membership should be at least half-a-crown, and that this should go to enable the Executive to work the Society.

It was moved and seconded that Mr. Hartmann's scheme be remitted to the Executive, with instructions to act upon it as far as possible. The resolution was carried.

Some questions arose upon the non-insertion of a Profit and Loss account in the financial statement, and, upon the motion of Mr. Fisher, it was moved and carried that the financial report be adopted, and that it be an instruction to the secretary, in future financial reports, to give a statement of assets and liabilities.

The Conference then proceeded to the election of officers. Mr. Foote vacated the chair to Mr. C. Watts, while he was nominated by Mr. BATER, on behalf of the Finsbury Branch, and seconded by Mr. CHAPMAN, to be President for the ensuing year. He was elected with but a single dissentient.

The following Vice-Presidents were then re-elected:—Dr. T. R. Allinson, G. Anderson, E. Bater, L. Büchner, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, J. F. Dewar, R. Forder, J. Grange, T. Gorniot, S. Hartmann, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, S. M. Peacock, C. Pegg, W. Pratt, V. Roger, J. H. Ridgway, F. Schaller, H. J. Stace, J. Symes, S. R. Thompson, E. Truelove, J. Umpleby, E. M. Vance, G. J. Warren, C. Watts, and J. M. Wheeler.

The name of Miss Annie Brown was added to the list of

Vice-Presidents; and, on the motion of Mr. BLACK, the standing orders were suspended for the purpose of adding the name of Mr. Thomas Robertson (of Glasgow), whose nomination was supported by Mr. Cohen, and whose worth was testified to by the President. It was carried *nem con.*

The motion by Mr. CHARLES WATTS, "That the office of Honorary Secretary be abolished," evoked from Mr. R. FORDER the expression of his desire to die in the office, and was lost by a large majority.

Mr. WHEELER then moved the resolution standing in the name of the Executive, that Mr. Forder be re-elected Honorary Secretary, which was carried unanimously.

It was moved, seconded, and carried unanimously that Mr. S. Hartmann be re-elected Hon. Treasurer, and Messrs. W. B. Thompson (of Chatham) and H. Brown (of London) were appointed auditors.

The motion of the Bristol Branch, through Mr. Watts Treasurer, "That the next Conference meeting-place be decided at the Annual Conference," when put to the vote, was lost. On its second resolution, "That country Branches may appoint a member of any of the London Branches to represent them on the Executive," Mr. Foote observed that this was already done; but the motion was allowed to stand on the Agenda, that those who were not aware of the rule of practice might have their attention called to it.

The motion, that the rule relating to Corresponding Council members be abolished, was lost.

The motion, "That Branches be informed of all business to be transacted at the monthly Executive meeting," was altered to important business, and carried by sixteen to fourteen.

The motion of the Finsbury Branch, "That the Annual Subscription to the Society should be raised to the minimum of two shillings per year, one shilling of which should go to the Central Fund, and the rest be retained by the Branches," was carried, several delegates expressing a wish that the old minimum of four shillings were returned to.

The motion of the same Branch, "That the General Secretary be instructed to furnish all provincial Branch secretaries with a copy of the minutes of the monthly Executive meetings," was lost.

The motion by the Chatham Branch, "That it be an instruction to the next Executive to frame and carry into effect a Lecture Scheme for the propagandist work of the N. S. S.," was allowed to be considered as included in the instructions to forward Mr. Hartmann's scheme; and the time, which had already been extended by an hour, having expired, the motion by the Derby Branch, "That a sheet Almanack be published in addition to the one now issued," was remitted to the Executive.

Mr. FOOTE announced that his statement *re* the undertaking, in accordance with a resolution of the last Conference, to prepare for the incorporation of a Society to hold and use property, and to receive gifts and legacies, for Secular purposes, should appear in the *Freethinker*; and the motions of Mr. C. Watts were adjourned.

The evening meeting after the Conference, in the Secular Hall, Leicester, was, considering the weather, very fairly attended. The audience was addressed by Mr. Moss, who spoke well of the progress of Freethought and Secular philosophy; Mr. Heaford, who dilated optimistically and with animation on the new gospel of the salvation of the body; Mr. Cohen, who dealt with philosophic clearness on the position of Freethinkers; Mr. Gimson, who remarked that having so many well-known Freethinkers on the platform reminded him of the time when Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, G. J. Holyoake, "B. V.," and Mr. and Mrs. T. Wright were present at the opening of the hall, and who illustrated the position of Secularism by a capital story of a little girl who, when left in bed, was frightened, and was told: "You know God is with you"; to which she replied: "Well, take away God and leave me the light." Mr. Watts gave some strong and caustic criticisms on the Jubilee fever, and wound up with a rousing peroration on the celebration of the true jubilee of human progress. Mr. Forder spoke briefly, but with humor and point; and Mr. Foote, as usual, wound up the proceedings with eloquence and effect. A collection was made for the Benevolent Fund, which realized £3 2s.

On Whit Monday the delegates and Leicester friends united in a most pleasant drive, in stylish brakes and other vehicles, chiefly the omnipresent cycle, through Charnwood Forest to Longcliffe. The grand scenery and glorious rhododendrons delighted the visitors. An excellent repast, at which over a hundred sat down, was provided in a tent, and brief speeches of fraternal greeting between Leicester and other Secular societies were made by Mr. Gimson and Mr. Foote, the last of whom expressed a hope that what had been seen at Leicester would be a stimulus to exertion among Secularists in other districts. The party returned by way of Loughborough and Mount Sorrel, many alighting to call on friend Bilson; and reached Leicester in time for the return trains, one and all declaring themselves charmed with their reception.

BOOK CHAT.

TOURGENEFF's letters to George Sand are being prepared for publication. The bulk of the correspondence runs on questions of literary history and criticism, but the Russian novelist also sets forth his views on sentimental subjects. His letters to Emile Zola will be extensively edited, as the judgments they contain on many famous contemporary men of letters are believed to be most outspoken.

Olive Schreiner's *Trooper Peter Halket* has stirred up a new interest in her greater work. A new edition of *The Story of an African Farm* is now in the press, bringing the total number of volumes up to eighty-three thousand. It is a capital work to introduce the seeds of Freethought to young women.

Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton expects to bring out the second and concluding part of *The Woman's Bible* in June. Mrs. Stanton, who is eighty-one, continues the task alone in the *Boston Investigator*, Christian criticism having scared some of her assistants. Mrs. Stanton will subsequently publish her *Reminiscences*.

A very neat pocket edition of Marlowe's *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* has been published by J. M. Dent & Co. It is edited, with a preface, notes, and glossary, by Israel Gollancz, M.A., and has as frontispiece an etching of Faustus after Rembrandt. The little book is all that can be desired by a student of the play and of the morning star of the English drama.

Stories of compacts with the devil naturally arose from the Biblical conception of the devil, as a being going about seeking to ensnare souls, and having the kingdom of the world and the glory of them at his bestowal. The legend in the Middle Ages centred mainly round Theophilus, who was rescued by prayer to the Virgin. This symbolized the characteristics of the Middle Ages. In the story of Faustus embodied in Marlowe we have a parable of the lust of power, and the re-awakening to Greek beauty of the Renaissance; while Goethe has continued the legend with its bearings on the modern spirit.

Marlowe is a name of interest to all Freethinkers. For if any man influenced Shakespeare it was he. And Marlowe met his early death while under a prosecution for blasphemy. An order for his arrest was issued by the Privy Council on May 18, 1593. The dissemination of irreligious doctrines was his offence, and he was specifically charged with having defamed the characters of Moses and of Jesus. The poet met his death in a tavern at Deptford, soon after the issue of the warrant, and the religionists of his time said it was a judgment on his impiety. In a paper on Marlowe, read by Mr. Wheeler before the Toynbee Hall Elizabethan Society, he suggested that, as Marlowe was a fugitive whose life was forfeit, and as there is no record of any trial of his murderer, it is possible that he met his death in attempting to escape from arrest. The stories circulated by Beard and Vaughan were evidently the result of imagination.

The veteran F. W. Newman issues through Watts & Co. his *Mature Thought on Christianity*. We shall give it our mature thought later on, and meantime, mention that Mr. Holyoake says: "This remarkable pamphlet has claims to perusal and notice. Anything is remarkable from an author of wide learning and reputation who writes at ninety-three, showing no decline in the boldness of thought and precision of statement. Reverence and candor mark every page."

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LEGITIMATION LEAGUE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR.—I do not like to accuse my dear old friend the *Freethinker* of unfairness, but I trust you will find room in your next number for my protest against the attitude you have assumed towards our movement. The *Freethinker* is generally so fully worthy of its grand name, and so far ahead of every other English weekly in its accessibility to new ideas, that I regarded as merely a temporary lapse your recent answer to my letter, in which you say: "It seems to us the world wants more discipline rather than more freedom in sexual relationships." The most superficial Freethinker would see the weakness of such a phrase if applied to religion or any other form of opinion, and I thought your readers might safely be left to answer such a pontifical utterance for themselves. But your review last week of *The Adult*, and this week of Mr. Dawson's book,

invite a reply, and I beg to trespass on your kind courtesy to ask you, first of all, to indicate exactly how Lillian Harman, or her portrait in *Sexual Wrongs*, can be designated as "somewhat curious." You ask that Mr. Dawson should tell the public what he and the Legitimation League are driving at. Seeing that most of your readers would understand this to mean that, in your opinion, we are hiding our real propaganda and generally attempting to mislead the public, I must protest against this criticism, seeing that for five years past our literature has been voluminous and at the disposal of the public. As you know, we have just published *The Adult*, a monthly periodical in which our principles are fully explained. We believe in Free Love, we object to the State-enforced tie of marriage, and we seek for justice to be done to illegitimate children in all cases in which their parents are willing to acknowledge them.

Why you should assert that the Legitimation League regards the question of legitimation as a simple one is incomprehensible to any student of our literature. The subject bristles with difficulties, and we have only reached our present unassailable position on this topic by carefully differentiating between illegitimate children and acknowledged illegitimate children. Our principle is that parents of such children should be proud of their offspring, instead of ashamed of them; and while we are doing all we can to secure an alteration of the law, and an abolition of all enactments which stand in the way of parents willing to do justice to their "natural" children, we consider that outside the laws of inheritance the stigma against illegitimates would be greatly minimized by means of the "acknowledgment" we desire to advocate. Most emphatically we maintain that no greater "attention to the details" than we have given is at all conceivable, and certainly no other organization in the world has given so much attention thereto.

Cordially thanking you for your promise to defend us if our liberty of utterance is attacked, and trusting my letter may make our position clearer to you,—Yours truly,
GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

[If Mr. Bedborough sees nothing curious in the portrait of Lillian Harman, we can only ask him to look at it again. We assure him that we do not regard our utterances as "pontifical." We only express our opinions for what they are worth.—EDITOR *Freethinker*.]

PROFANE JOKES.

A LITTLE girl going to church with her mother one Sunday saw some men working on the street-car tracks. "See those men breaking the Sabbath," said her mother, thinking to suggest a moral lesson. The little girl watched them gravely. Then she looked up in her mother's face and said: "And God can't mend it."

A lady of rank, whose Sunday duties had long been neglected, was moved one day to attend, with her daughters, the morning services at the little chapel of St. James's Palace. Unluckily, there was no room; every seat was filled. "Well, never mind, dears," said my lady to her girls, as they turned away. "Anyhow, we have done the civil thing." She had paid her "call."

Her organ was pumped by a self-willed old sexton, who had his own ideas as to how long an organ voluntary should last, and would shut off the wind when he thought there had been enough. One Sunday the organist thought she would forestall any such accident by writing an appeal in the early part of the service, and giving it to the sexton. The old man received the note, and supposed it was for the minister. In spite of her frantic beckonings, he went straight to the pulpit with the note, and the astonished preacher read this message: "Oblige me this morning by blowing away till I give you the signal to stop."

A negro woman who was a cook had a Chinaman for a beau, and the mistress of the house, to discourage the marriage, asked the negro woman if she had ever thought what their children would be. "Oh, yes," said the negro woman, "we has talked it all over, and knowed the children would all be Jews; but we don't kear."

The priest and priestess of one of the minor religions contemplated the votive offerings of edibles of the highest grade which had been placed before the idol. "Pretty good lay-out to-day," said the priest. "And just to think," said the priestess, with the light that can come only in the eyes of woman illumining her orbs, "we got them at a sacrifice!"

The idea of certain supernatural gifts being conferred upon certain men is the common error of the most advanced races, as well as the most degraded peoples of antiquity.—*Renan*.

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, F. Verinder, "The English 'Inquisition.'"
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, T. Parris, "The Philosophy of Nihilism"—preceded by vocal and instrumental music. June 12, at 8.30, *Chimney Corner* by the Dramatic Class. June 16, at 8, Special Variety Entertainment by the Mildmay Radical Club.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell.
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. C. Lyons, "Secularism and Christianity."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday School; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Bible as a Text-book of Morals."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Religion."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Heaven and Hell."
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 8.15, A. B. Moss, "The Devil's Doom."
EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen, "Missionaries."
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, R. P. Edwards, "A Tour Through the British Museum."
HARROW-ROAD (corner of Waltherton-road): 8.30, J. Fagan.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "Secularism."
KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, J. Fagan.
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, W. Heaford.
LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon's lane): 11.30, C. Cohen.
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam; 7, W. J. Ramsey.
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, H. Snell.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 8.15, C. Cohen.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): C. Watts—11, "The Christian's New Bible"; 3, "The Sequel of the Cross"; 7, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb." June 15, at the Albert-road School, Aston, at 8, O. Watts, "Unbelief Justified." June 15, at the Wattville-street School, Handsworth, at 8, O. Watts, "A Plea for Secular Education."
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Percy Ward, "What will you Give us in the Place of Christianity?"
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, J. Roberts, "Dean Farrar's New Book." Committee meeting after lecture.
PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Report of Delegate at Conference.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CHATHAM (corner of Lines): 11.15, P. Ward, "The Greatest Lie in the World."

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—June 13, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—June 13, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 27, m., Wood Green; e., Edmonton.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—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.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old-Ford-road, London, E.—July 4, m., Mile End Waste; e., Edmonton. September 5, Limehouse.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, Camden-road, N.W.—June 20, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 27, m., Limehouse.

H. P. WARD, 9 Leighton-crescent, Leighton-road, N.W.—June 13, m., New Brompton; e., New Brompton. 20, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Finsbury Park; e., Bradlaugh Club. 27, m., Camberwell Station-road; a., Peckham Rye.

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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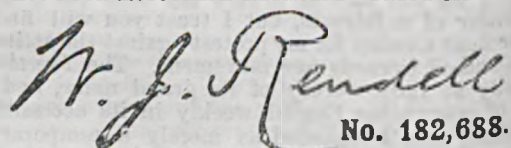
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