

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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## MR. STEAD'S "JULIA."

WHOEVER thinks that folly is going to die a natural death in the immediate future is a very sanguine optimist. Most men (George Eliot said) take the absurd like donkey's take thistles, as an aid to digestion. And the law of condiments is that the more you take the more you require. The man who begins with a pinch of curry, ends by swamping his meat with the hottest liquid preparation on this side of Hades. In the same way, a mere pinch of absurdity often leads to an orgie of superstition. Take the case of Mrs. Besant, for instance. This estimable lady found Materialism too insipid. It suited her palate for some time, but at length it grew tiresome. She longed for a flavor of Spiritualism in her mental diet. She took it, and soon wanted more and more; and now the natural has so far given way to the mystic that the proportion reminds one of Jack Falstaff's ha'p'oth of bread to all that intolerable quantity of sack. But this does not impair her popularity; certainly it does not interfere with her success. She has exchanged a threepenny audience for a shilling one, with higher prices still, which she would have thought positively "shocking" in the old Hall of Science days.

The fact is the fools like being kept in countenance, and if a clever publicist will only do that, he may look for a handsome reward. To tell them they *are* fools is to court ostracism and ruin; for, as Carlyle said, they form the vast majority of the population. To hold your tongue altogether is to pass unpersecuted—and unheeded. But to put on an extra-large fool's-cap, with loud-jingling bells, is to win the admiration and suffrages of the foolish crowd. Besides, in this age, when orthodoxy is so intellectually played-out, it is extremely grateful to "the general"—as Shakespeare called them—to find clever people believing in *some* kind of religion. If they only believe in a sort of something, it suffices; and if they believe in the wildest superstitions, it is so much the better. The majority is reassured. "We are not so silly, after all," it says; and it goes on gnashing its multitudinous teeth at the few who will not countenance in anywise its fatuous irrationality.

No open-eyed observer can doubt that a certain superstitious reaction is going on at this end of the nineteenth century. Mr. Grant Allen, in his recent great book, maintains that religion has always been essentially the Cult of the Dead. Towards the end of his work he pens the following suggestive paragraph:—

"Thus the Cult of the Dead, which is the earliest origin of all religion, in the sense of worship, is also the last relic of the religious spirit which survives the gradual decay of faith due to modern scepticism. To this cause I refer on the whole the spiritualistic utterances of so many among our leaders of modern science. They have rejected religion, but they cannot reject the inherited and ingrained religious emotions."

Mr. Allen notes that "especially in Protestant and sceptical England and America" these emotions make themselves felt in the "rise of spiritualism and kindred beliefs, which are but the doctrine of the ghost or shade in its purified form." Religion is, in fact, Ghostology. Those who are not satisfied with great elaborate systems like Christianity turn to the old raw material of the death-superstition, and try to manufacture a special article for themselves. Instead of waiting for kingdom-come, in a spirit of hopeful expectancy, more or less tempered by

worldly indifference, they seek after direct intercourse with the dead; and while this disposition obtains there will always be a sufficient number of enterprising ladies and gentlemen ready to exploit it for the sake of notoriety, or still more solid advantages. These persons go to work in various ways. Some cultivate the acquaintance of remote Mahatmas, who have so developed the "higher nature" that they are (so to speak) in this world and the next at the same time. They do not talk of such common things as ghosts, but of astral forms; which is the new pretentious jargon of the same old superstition. Others spell out messages from the dead by means of table-knockings and similar sublime phenomena; others throw themselves into a "trance" and let the spirits of the dead speak through their mouths, which are afterwards filled more substantially by the proceeds of the performance; while others put their right hands at the disposition of the said spirits, and write "automatically" what they have to communicate.

The last species of intercourse with the "gone before" community is affected by Mr. W. T. Stead, who has just given to the world his *Letters from Julia; or, Light from the Borderland*. At a certain opportune moment Mr. Stead, much to his own surprise, though not so much to *ours*, began to "develop an hitherto unsuspected gift of automatic writing." The word "gift" is distinctly good. It suggests that Mr. Stead has at least a half-conscious idea of the real nature of his achievement. But let us hear his explanation.

"Automatic writing, I may explain for those unfamiliar with the term, is writing that is written by the hand of a person which is not under the control of his conscious mind. The hand apparently writes of itself, the person to whom the hand belongs having no knowledge of what it is about to write. It is a very familiar and simple form of mediumship, which in no way impairs the writer's faculties or places his personality under the control of any other intelligence."

"Sitting alone," Mr. Stead says, "with a tranquil mind, I consciously placed my right hand, with the pen held in the ordinary way, at the disposal of Julia, and watched with keen and sceptical interest to see what it would write." What it did write, or rather a selected portion of it, is printed in this little volume. The hand is the hand of Mr. Stead, but the voice is the voice of Julia. So says Mr. Stead himself, and perhaps he believes it. But after reading the messages very carefully, with a more keen and sceptical interest than he had in receiving them, we are thoroughly convinced that the hand and the voice belong to the same individual. There is absolutely nothing in the volume that Mr. Stead could not have easily written without Julia's assistance or intervention. The opinions, the sentiments, are all his own. He tells us that the writing is "in many respects much superior" to his own; that he could not pen those "eloquent and touching pleas for the Higher Life." But in our judgment he pays them an unmerited compliment. They are really quite on a level with his own spiritual capacities.

Mr. Stead gives a number of reasons for asserting that the writing did not proceed from his own "sub-conscious mind." Julia told him, for instance, of things he did not know; which may be true if his memory is infallible. She wrote the names of persons she knew when in the flesh, who were unknown to him. She even prophesied things that came to pass. But the details are withheld, and there is no opportunity for cross-examination. The



"evidence" is therefore such as would be held worthless in a court of law.

"Psychic persons," whatever they are, have actually seen the form of Julia standing by him while he was writing. Mr. Stead's mediumship did not go to that length. His "gift" is of the hand, not of the eye—which, in those psychic persons, appears to have reached a most incomprehensible stage of development. "Several of them," Mr. Stead says, "have not only described her, but have given her name." Angels and ministers of grace defend us! Is a name a part of one's identity? Do spirit forms wear it as a label on a conspicuous section of their ghostly anatomy? How, in the name of wonder, did those psychic persons ascertain that the lady spirit was called Julia? We invite Mr. Stead to read a diverting scene in the Second Part of *King Henry VI.*, where the malicious Duke of Gloster plays the devil with a similar piece of nonsense. Simpcox, a poor man blind from birth, has just found his sight miraculously at the shrine of good Saint Alban; and on the very heels of the miracle Gloster subjects him to a close examination. Prior to that day Simpcox has never seen cloaks and gowns, yet he tells straight away the color of those worn by various members of the party. Gloster thereupon calls him "the lyingest knave in Christendom."

"If thou hadst been born blind, thou might'st as well know all our names, as thus to name the several colors we do wear. Sight may distinguish colors; but suddenly to nominate them all, it is impossible."

Mr. Stead should ponder this bit of keen comedy, and then tell us how those psychic persons knew Julia's name.

But as to the real authorship of these letters. Mr. Stead is certain they were not "the outcome of his conscious mind." Of course they "may proceed" from his "sub-conscious mind," but he does not think so; indeed, he is persuaded to the contrary. In any case, he protests that he has "no personal interest to serve" in putting forward such communications. He thinks it will be to his disadvantage, and will tend to "discount and discredit" everything else he says. But this strikes us as a fanciful apprehension. "Superstition is not quite so unfashionable. It is by no means a bar to public confidence. It is the Atheist, not the Superstitionist, who is looked upon with disfavor. Mr. Stead's motives may be ever so pure and even lofty, but one's respect for them is not heightened by superfluous protestations and argumentative reassurances.

It is quite conceivable, on the supposition of Mr. Stead's strict honesty, that his sub-conscious mind, as he calls it, was the author of all these communications. Other persons, of much greater simplicity than himself, have been self-deceived in this way. Take the case of the Swedenborgian family of the Wilkinsons. In 1858 a book called *Spirit-Drawing: A Personal Narrative* was published by Mr. W. M. Wilkinson, whose hand took to "automatic writing," just like Mr. Stead's. Messages came through it from his dead son. Like the letters of Julia, they were more rhapsodical than instructive. While writing them Mr. Wilkinson's mind, as he thought, was absolutely passive. But, as Mr. W. C. Roscoe pointed out, a "passive" mind is often more or less mechanically employed. If a spirit guided Mr. Wilkinson's hand, why could it not do so while the whole powers of his mind were actively engaged in some other direction? The fact that it could not seem to show that the writing proceeded, after all, from the writer's own personality. This may also be said of the *Improvisations of the Spirit* by the highly-gifted James John Garth Wilkinson, written about the same time and under the same influences. It was well remarked by James Thomson, in his superb essay on that strange book, that however many spirits breathed very different tunes through Dr. Wilkinson, they all came out his "own one favorite tune." They all sang Swedenborgianism. The writer's personality—mental, moral, and imaginative—was "all over the shop." This is true of all the supernatural, or superhuman, messages we ever examined. "Look," says the inspired penman, "I have got this from the Lord, or from an angel, or some other spirit." And at the first sight we are rather staggered, for there is generally something unusual in the form of the deliverance. But when we investigate the substance we smile; the egg is so obviously of the scribe's own laying.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## THE SIGHT OF HELL.\*

(See page 146.)

THE Jesuits are credited with a saying to the effect: "Let us have the first decade of children's lives, and those who can may mould them afterwards." *The Sight of Hell*, by Father Furniss, may indicate the methods employed. The candidate for the company of Jesus has, during his thirty days' retreat, to meditate on hell. Loyola lays it down in his *Spiritual Exercises* :—

"The first point is to *behold*, in imagination, the vast conflagration of hell, and the souls therein, enclosed in certain flaming bodies, as it were in a prison of fire. Secondly, to *hear*, in imagination, the wailings, the shrieks, cries, and blasphemies against Christ and his saints issuing thence. Third, thoroughly to *smell*, even with the smelling of the imagination, the smoke, brimstone, and the horrid stench of some sewer or filth and rottenness. Fourthly, to *taste* in like manner the bitterest things; such as tears, rancor, the worm of conscience. Fifthly, to *touch* in a manner those fires, by whose touch those very souls are burnt up."

This is for novices of sixteen. But Father Furniss amplifies it much for children, the design being the same—to so immerse the mind in the thought of ever-burning hell till it becomes a waxen mould ready to take what stamp the priest may please.

Dante was pointed out as "the man who had been to hell." Father Furniss surely, too, might say: "I have been there." He describes the infernal regions as minutely as an old resident, and is on terms of familiarity with its inhabitants. He tells us "the Devil is king of hell." "Millions and millions of devils are always round him waiting for his orders. Every day he sends wicked spirits, whose numbers cannot be counted, into Europe, Asia, Africa, America [Australia is omitted; perhaps those there are damned already], into every country, and town, and village, and house, and to every human creature." When the tempted falls and dies, crowds of hideous devils, with cries of spiteful joy, receive the soul. One is a striking devil:—

"Little child, if you go to Hell, there will be a devil at your side to strike you. He will go on striking you every minute for ever and ever, without ever stopping. The first stroke will make your body as bad as the body of Job, covered from head to foot with sores and ulcers. The second stroke will make your body twice as bad as the body of Job. The third stroke will make your body three times as bad as the body of Job. The fourth stroke will make your body four times as bad as the body of Job. How, then, will your body be after the devil has been striking it every moment for a hundred million of years without stopping?"

This infernal conundrum must, I think, be given up. Then the sinner is "chained down on a bed of red-hot blazing fire," where fire-worms abound. St. Basil says that "in hell there will be worms without number eating the flesh, and their bites will be unbearable." St. Teresa says that she found the entrance into hell filled with these venomous insects. Everything that can terrify the human mind is conjured up, and then we are taken through the dungeons of hell. In one is a young girl with a dress made of fire; her bonnet burns her head; it burns into the skin; it scorches the bone of the skull and makes it smoke. The red-hot fiery heat burns into the brain and melts it.

"You do not, perhaps, like a headache. Think what a headache that girl must have. But see more. She is wrapped up in flames, for her frock is fire. If she were on the earth, she would be burnt to a cinder in a moment. But she is in Hell, where fire burns everything, but burns nothing away. There she stands burning and scorched; there she will stand for ever burning and scorched! She counts with her fingers the moments as they pass away slowly, for each moment seems to her like a hundred years. As she counts the moments she remembers that she will have to count them for ever and ever."

Then there is a dungeon with a red-hot floor:—

"See, on the middle of that red-hot floor stands a girl. She looks about sixteen years old. Her feet are bare; she has neither shoes nor stockings on her feet; her bare feet stand on the red-hot burning floor. The door of this room has never been opened before since she

\* *Books for Children and Young Persons* (Book x.). *The Sight of Hell*, by the Rev. J. Furniss, C.S.S.R., Permissu Superiorum. (Dublin: James Duffy & Co., Limited, 15 Wellington Quay.)



first set her foot on the red-hot floor. Now she sees that the door is opening. She rushes forward. She has gone down on her knees on the red-hot floor. Listen! she speaks. She says: 'I have been standing with my bare feet on this red-hot floor for years. Day and night my only standing-place has been this red-hot floor. Sleep never came on me for a moment, that I might forget this horrible burning floor. Look,' she says, 'at my burnt and bleeding feet. Let me go off this burning floor for one moment, only for one single short moment. Oh, that in this endless eternity of years I might forget the pain only for one single moment.' The devil answers her question: 'Do you ask,' he says, 'for a moment, for one moment to forget your pain? No, not for one single moment during the never-ending eternity of years shall you ever leave this red-hot floor!' 'Is it so?' the girl says with a sigh, that seems to break her heart; 'then, at least, let somebody go to my little brothers and sisters who are alive, and tell them not to do the bad things which I did, so they will never have to come and stand on the red-hot floor.' The devil answers her again: 'Your little brothers and sisters have the priests to tell them these things. If they will not listen to the priests, neither would they listen, even if somebody should go to them from the dead.'

In this parody on the story of Dives and Lazarus, in the sixteenth chapter of Luke, I must say that Father Furniss improves on Jesus Christ. In the blessed gospel the voice of humanity cries from hell; the rich man asks that his brethren may be saved from torment; and the voice of inhumanity answers from Abraham in heaven. Father Furniss more appropriately puts Abraham's celestial sentiments into the devil's mouth. The Father must have been inspired to make the devil recommend the priests.

This little book displays the real inwardness of religion so much more glaringly than I could hope to do that I am tempted to reprint much more. The endeavor to bring home to the infant mind the horrors and the eternity of hell shows ingenuity, not originality, for priest and monk have surpassed themselves in this direction, and Father Furniss had a voluminous store of theological literature to draw from. Two more short extracts shall suffice:—

"The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor of the oven. You can see on the face of this little child what you see on the faces of all in Hell—despair, desperate and horrible!"

"Perhaps at this moment, seven o'clock in the evening, a child is just going into Hell. To-morrow evening, at seven o'clock, go and knock at the gates of Hell, and ask what the child is doing. The devils will go and look. Then they will come back again and say, *The child is burning!* Go in a week and ask what the child is doing; you will get the same answer—*It is burning!* Go in a year and ask; the same answer comes—*It is burning!* Go in a million of years and ask the same question; the answer is just the same—*It is burning!* So if you go for ever and ever, you will always get the same answer—*It is burning in the fire!*"

"Enough!" an impulsive reader may exclaim; "a flaming furnace were the fitting fate for this effusion from Father Furniss. Let it flare in fire." Rather preserve the damning proof what poison priests provide in place of food. Place carefully aside; first underline *permissu superiorum*; doubly underline FOR CHILDREN.

"For children"; that's the essence of the charge. Were you or I solemnly threatened with this *Sight of Hell*, we'd smile or shrug. Since ridicule befits ridiculous, perchance might say: "Who contracts for the coals? Asbestos there must be in great demand. Since fishes like the water, doubtless fiends come to enjoy the fire, as much as you, the saintly priest, who on heaven's battlement delight in watching sinners frizzle; and your God, the dear old gentleman upstairs who runs the show, and daily recreates his creatures just to torture them when torment is quite useless, how worthy he *your* worship." But when the painted devil-mask that men deride is brought to fright a child, absurdity becomes atrocity. Smile turns to indignation. "Hands off there! Play pranks elsewhere; take back your hideous incubus of hell to where 'twas hatched—the torture-cells of loveless priests, chained to a church's corpse, whose hearts were frozen to its heart of stone, whose eyes had never lit at children's smiles, and ears had never heard the still, sad music of humanity. Hands off the little children!"

J. M. WHEELER.

## SECULARISM AND MARRIAGE.

THERE is no more important epoch in human life than that of marriage. It either makes or mars the career of those who enter upon it. When a man and woman are morally and physically suited to each other, and are united in matrimony, a sphere of existence is entered upon that enhances their happiness to a degree far beyond the advantages conferred by any other condition of life. If, however, the marriage bond is thoughtlessly contracted, without due consideration as to its nature and results, the domestic circle is often deprived of that harmony, mutual confidence, and reciprocal affection which should characterize every home, and which are essential to the comfort of the family. Unfortunately, too many marriages are hastily made, and not always prompted by real affection. Such marriages are not the "union of hearts," but the outcome of either uncontrolled passion, the desire for wealth, or a hope to avoid the evils of poverty. In any of these cases it is a dangerous venture, and, more often than not, these indiscreet unions are followed—particularly on the wife's part—by untold misery, years of mental anguish, physical suffering, and, not unfrequently, by premature deaths. It has been observed that "marriage is a lottery, from which more blanks are drawn than prizes." If this be true, it is not the fault of the connubial state, but it is rather the consequence of a lack of foresight and the non-exercise of judicious thought.

The Secular idea of marriage is that it should be a free civil contract, resulting from pure and reciprocal affection. We would discard all religious ceremony at the nuptials. We require no priest, nor any recital of that combination of falsehood and absurdity from the Prayer-book which is used in the churches upon such occasions. It is sometimes urged that Secularists wish to do away with the marriage tie altogether. We have no such desire, for to do so would, in our opinion, be an injustice to woman, leaving her a victim to the caprice and instability of man. There are too many husbands who, having married in haste, repent at leisure. What may be done in an ideal state of society is one thing; what is necessary in our present condition of existence is another. We have to take men as they are, and, judging from what is constantly occurring in our divorce-courts, many of them are destitute of that honor which is necessary to enable their word to be taken as abiding law. It is our firm conviction that nothing would justify a man neglecting his home, or in ill-treating and deserting his wife. We have always held that a Secularist should show the excellence of his principles in his own home, which should be the centre of true happiness. If a man neglect his wife and children, whatever else he may be, he is no Secularist.

It may be asked, What is to be done where the husband and wife find that they are ill-mated and cannot live happily together? Must their lives be for ever embittered through the mistake they have made in becoming "as one"? Certainly not; for that would be the reverse of carrying out the Secular idea of happiness. Hence we advocate a radical improvement in our laws of divorce, so that husbands and wives, who cannot live as such in an amicable manner, should be permitted to legally separate, making proper arrangements for the care and training of the children, if there are any. The National Secular Society, in its "Immediate and Practical Objects," states, as two features of its work: "A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce. The equalization of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions." To deny divorce where it is mutually desired, or to inflict any penalty upon those who have been divorced, appears to us to be exceedingly unjust. Nevertheless, this is what certain Christians are in the habit of doing at the present time. The Bishop of Winchester recently issued a notice to his Surrogates that marriage licences are not to be granted in any case to divorced persons while the former husband or wife is living, whether the person applying was in fault or not (*Christian World*, April 8, 1897). This is theological impertinence which ought not to be tolerated, for if it were acted upon it would inflict misery upon many pure women and honorable men. Besides, in some cases



it may lead to conduct which "Mrs. Grundy" would pronounce highly immoral.

In our opinion, the Secular teaching as to the matrimonial state is far superior to that taught upon the subject in the Bible. Therein it is said: "Thy [woman's] desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis iii. 16). It enjoins that, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything (Ephesians v. 22-24). Women are not to speak in public, but to be under obedience, as also saith the law; they are not permitted to teach, but to learn in silence with all subjection, for the reason that "Adam was first formed, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression" (1 Timothy ii. 11-14). These notions are not, when accepted, calculated to elevate the character or better the condition of woman. To such teachings as these we, as Secularists, are diametrically opposed. They make woman an abject slave to man. Why should he "rule over her"? Between man and wife, in the domestic sphere, absolute equality should obtain. For a wife to be compelled to submit herself to her husband "in everything" would be to impose upon her a humiliation alike unjust and undignified. Some husbands do not deserve the submission of their wives in *anything*, not to say *everything*. And why should a woman "learn in silence"? Evidently St. Paul's experience of woman was limited, or he would have known that her tongue was not likely to remain a silent member. Why should it? If she is treated properly by the man she loves, her tongue will not be used to inflict upon him pain; while, on the other hand, if she is the victim of neglect and domestic oppression, she is quite justified in "saying a few words" in defence of her rights. It may be alleged that St. Paul also said: "Husbands, love your wives." But such a request upon his part was unnecessary. A man can love his wife without being told to do so; and if he cannot love her, to be told to do so will have no avail. Love cannot be evoked at command. It is an inspiration, a growth, the result of reciprocal feeling, and where these elements are absent crude passion may exist, but not pure and genuine love.

Secularism is sometimes charged with teaching "loose views" upon the marriage question. We ask when and where? A greater falsehood never emanated from the orthodox mind. Not one line can be found in the whole of the official literature of the various Secular societies which seeks to rob marriage of its purest and noblest function. Some disbelievers in Christianity no doubt entertain unpopular notions as to the marriage state. But Secularism is in no way responsible for these opinions. Would orthodox believers consider that we should be justified in blaming Christianity for the "loose" practices in matrimonial life as narrated in the Bible in connection with Abram and Hagar (Genesis xvi. 2-4); Jacob and his wife's servants (Genesis xxx.); or God's sanction of adultery with David's wives (2 Samuel xii. 11)? The records of history also show that professed Christians have been guilty of the grossest forms of impurity in the marriage state. The pious Dr. G. Gregory, in his *History of the Christian Church*, writes that in the sixteenth century the Anabaptist prophet, Boccold, had as many as fourteen wives, which he deemed the essence of "Christian liberty." Gregory adds: "After the example of their prophet, the multitude gave themselves up to the most licentious and uncontrolled gratification of their desires. No man remained satisfied with a single wife. Not to use their Christian liberty was deemed a crime" (vol. ii., p. 437). Lecky also states: "The ambiguous position of the clergy with reference to marriage already led to grave disorder. In the time of St. Cyprian, before the outbreak of the Decian persecution, it had been common to find clergy professing celibacy, but keeping, under various pretexts, their mistresses in their houses; and, after Constantine, the complaints on this subject became loud and general" (*History of European Morals*, vol. ii., pp. 159-60).

In the face of these Biblical and ecclesiastical records, Christians should blush at the conduct of their own friends, and cease circulating mean and calumnious reports about Secularists, who are ever ready to vindicate the dignity and honor of the marriage state, and the purity, freedom, and affection of the home.

CHARLES WATTS.

Maximize morals, minimize religion.—*Jeremy Bentham.*

## ZOLA THE IDEALIST.

[EDITORIAL NOTE.—It seems a little ungenerous to be drastically criticising Zola the artist in the midst of the great struggle of Zola the man for what he deems the rights of justice and humanity. At the same time, it must be allowed that the author of a new book challenges literary criticism; and on this ground we afford room to the following article, which ably presents a certain view of Zola's work, on which, of course, there not only is, but will be, much difference of opinion. In this respect it behoves a journal bearing the name of *Freethinker* to be catholic, and it must always be distinctly understood that the writers of signed articles in our columns are solely and entirely responsible for the views they express.]

ONE curious fact about the letter of sympathy which the English world of letters is sending to Emile Zola is the extreme circumspection of terms in which that letter is couched; and, indeed, a glance at a few of the signatures quite sufficiently convinces that an appreciation of his courage in the now famous trial but rarely involves a sympathy with his methods in art. What those methods are, or, rather, what are the motives at work behind them, we may now, perhaps, more clearly understand, since in his latest novel, *Paris*, published quite recently, Zola has finally cleared the ground by declaring that religion must, in any view of a regenerate and enlightened society, be set aside as a delusion and a snare; in part, because science has already made an end of it; but chiefly, it would seem, because he is assured that a belief in any ideal future state is often derogatory to all wholesome progress in the present. What he calls for—what he shouted for in the Palace of Justice, is truth. Truth and justice! War, Zola further leads us to believe, would, with the advent of these and the extermination of religion, become itself practically extinct. That the book is in some sort a mere pamphlet, that it assumes an attitude of apology for many dangerous measures, even the friends of M. Zola can scarcely fail to admit; how it will act upon his enemies we can only vaguely estimate. Of the many and various forms of amelioration on which he touches a knowledge is only to be obtained from the book itself; but of one thing at least the truth is now sufficiently established—that Zola is before all things else an Idealist. His is the vision of the bourgeois; his caste that of the typical bourgeois, content with second-hand estimates of men and the relations of men; and society upon report must needs be an idealized state of things. His own definition of art is well known—Nature seen through the medium of a temperament; and from that focus his eyes have never been withdrawn. A Realist can have no possible point of view, since every view must of necessity be his point. But with Zola all this is reversed; one point only is possible to him, and by this special medium he sees an ideal condition of things, whether good or ill—extremely ill, by preference. At length, however, he has got upon a pedestal and postured heroically, with something of the prophet in his utterance. Such a consummation was, of course, inevitable; nor is this attitude of the prophet-philosopher new to him. In "Doctor Pascal," the pendant to the Rougon-Macquart series, we have Zola, thinly veiled, as the physician, with apologies, who cuts that he may heal. Doctor Pascal, equally with our old friend Pierre Froment, whom Zola resuscitates in *Paris*, is the mouthpiece of the novelist, and as a creation, it should be added, equally wooden.

But it seems that, in the end, we are to judge Zola on a point of style. His relentless note-taking, his voracious reading of books bearing upon the subject he is desirous of exploiting, and his laborious industry in the digestion of these, are well known. And yet plainly all this, with whatever results accrue, is possible to any man of equal energy and application. It is not, however, so commonly known that Zola's actual intimacy with his subject is often confined to a drive into the country—as, for instance, while writing *La Terre* he took a drive into the country to see the peasants at their work; which is just about equivalent to reading a pamphlet on agriculture. In either case the impression will not be very "real." An amusing instance, too, is that story of his lurching with an actress of the Variétés—a fact which he quite naively communicated to an interviewer, believing it must have its special effect upon a particular scene. We shall, perhaps, find a parallel to this in the history of our own literature if we reflect that Hall Caine went to see the Derby run before writing a certain ineffectual chapter of *The Christian*. But neither



the author of *The Christian*, nor the writer of *Paris*, is an Impressionist. Zola's treatment of the ordinary (*i.e.*, natural-realistic) portions of his story is dull to banality; it is not within his power to give us the characteristic detail of a scene; he fails to compass the one unique and expressive touch necessary to the meanest picture. Yet, even here, he does not err in point of industry; on the contrary, his persistent fumbling for the word bores one, because he is never impatient, altering and expanding as fresh material is accumulated. Now, to any conscientious writer failing to fix this one magical word, an alternative is always open; and it is this alternative upon which Zola is constantly driven. Hence those yards of description which, to a reader of delicate tastes, have so often the savor of stage directions to a third-rate spectacular drama. More than ever is this defect apparent in his latest book. In short, if he moves us at all, it is by masses, by this endless piling up of words. Often, indeed, the impression is such that we are incapable of looking back upon the mechanical dove-tailing of borrowed accessories. And here is Zola's greatest triumph—and his least. Charm his pages have none; they remain sturdy columns of ineffectual prose. You can recall not one truly illuminating phrase. Instead, you have a sense of words, of infinite words. In place of the idea you are given the thing itself; and the thing itself is worthless as art. Nor can all this pious ornamentation, these erotic arabesques, avail where the symbol is obscured. They evoke no such sense of atmosphere as doubtless did Shakespeare's players, who merely chalked upon a board that this scene was a palace, and this a street in Rome. But Zola hopes to succeed by slang, by technicality of phrase. Shakespeare's employment of special nomenclatures is amazing; yet it is not suffered to destroy illusion in that wonderful first scene of *The Tempest*, where its use is probably more copious than in any other single scene. Still, in a way, Zola does succeed even here, for is it not as a painter in argot of scenes, such as must raise the gorge in any decent-minded reader, that he is known to the man in the street? And it is further characteristic of his fame that, until he gets down to such a scene, he is powerless to attract even readers of this class. What is done, however, is by dint of special terms. But those terms! Is it by reason of them that Zola is a Realist?

In that remarkable work, *Degeneration*, Dr. Nordau subjects Zola to an ingenious process. A few odd scraps of descriptive writing, culled from the works of Hugo, are placed in disarray along with passages similarly excerpted from Zola; the reader's discrimination is now invited to resolve which are Hugo's and which Zola's. It is a surprising and an effective test. The lack of distinction between the styles of the two writers, the Romanticist and the Realist, so-called—or perhaps it is the same quality of the pseudo-graphic, of distorted metaphor and far-sought simile, common to both, which surprises the reader into instant agreement with the critic. But, although Dr. Nordau's treatment of his subject can only be regarded as pathological, the result is a fierce light on the truth we are endeavoring to set up—namely, that Zola, so far from being a Realist and the literary son of Flaubert, as he claims, is perhaps the most idealistic writer of his time, as the lineal descendant of Hugo could hardly fail to be.

But chiefly where Zola fails as a Realist is in this, that, with infinite labor, he has compacted a theory for the systematic making of books whose least inspiration is in literature—a system which abrogates the first law of art; most chiefly because those emotions which he seeks to portray are not amenable to any system.

To argue against the defects of his art that Zola's life is one of increasing repute may be only to question lightly the probability of his ever achieving anything truly abiding in literature; for, indeed, at the end of forty years of labor it seems extremely unlikely that Zola will hereafter be regarded as a classic.

JOHN HAROLD DUOS.

All our sympathies should be with the men who work, who toil; with the women who labor for themselves and children; because we know that labor is the foundation of all, and that those who labor are the Caryatides that support the structure and glittering dome of civilization and progress.—*Ingersol*

## THE TRUE TRAGEDY OF JABERS.

Poor Jabers! Sad, indeed, his fate;  
He sought to raise a nation callous—  
An effort, though of purpose great,  
Which only brought him to the gallows.

He found how hard it was to reach  
A stiff-necked vip'rous generation;  
He wished morality to preach,  
They wanted prestidigitation.

He spoke of love. To do them good  
Comprised the sum of all his wishes;  
But they, a greedy, hungry brood,  
Thought only of the loaves and fishes.

"Who's this," cried they, "who dares to spout—  
Some carpenter, or base mechanic?  
The one we make a fuss about  
Should have pretensions Messianic."

'Twas hard to find no heed they paid  
His task to raise their low behavior;  
Until disciples boldly said,  
He was, indeed, the promised Savior.

He let it pass—first fatal flaw,  
Beginning of a string of blunders;  
"If you're the Christ, prove higher law,  
By working here on earth some wonders."

And so, to gain attention, he  
Must give more wine at drunken revels;  
And when he calms insanity,  
Must call it casting-out of devils.

'Twas vain to hope that this sufficed;  
They heeded not his moral teaching.  
"Just raise the dead, if you're the Christ,  
For working better is than preaching."

So Laz'rus must pretend to die,  
And stink enough to give infection,  
That Jabers might, when passing by,  
By calling cause his resurrection.

The Jews were still dissatisfied,  
And said: "We can't be disappointed;  
Return alive, then, when you've died,  
To prove you *are* the Lord's anointed."

They strung him up, and then did cry:  
"If you are God, now save your bacon."  
He only answered, with a sigh:  
"Mein Gott, why am I thus forsaken?"

### MORAL.

So now, dear friends, a warning take:  
Be what you *are* unto your neighbors;  
Avoid the old religious fake,  
Or, if you don't, remember Jabers.

LUCIANUS.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, who avoids English interviewers, has given a "sitting" to Mr. James Greelman on behalf of the *New York Journal*. His Grace declares himself in favor of a Catholic University for Ireland. Further, he says there is practically no opposition to the idea in the Church of England; the opposition comes from the Non-conformists. This is a hit, a palpable hit, at the Dissenting party. They are anxious to keep the sort of religion that suits them established in our Board schools, but they cry out lustily against every other form of establishment. They don't see, or won't see, that if religion is to be established at all, the statesman cannot discuss the truth or falsity of doctrines, but can only let the great Churches decide what they really want, and then grant their demands. In this matter, as in others, it is the first step that costs; and the road is logical all the way from religion in the State schools to religion in State universities.

"I think," the Archbishop said to his interviewer, "that nothing better could happen than the establishment of this Roman Catholic University on the lines laid down by Mr. Balfour. That is to say, no religious test should be applied to any but the chairs of theology." Practically, this is what obtains in our English Universities, in favor of the Church of England; and it is quite enough to decide the religious atmosphere of such establishments. After all, it is the general atmosphere that tells, rather than the particular dogmas.

It is always pleasant to see the engineer hoist with his own petard. We are delighted to behold the Noncon-



formists buffeted between the Anglicans and Catholics. They did not count on this when they settled that beautiful Compromise in regard to religious teaching in Board Schools. A little more suffering will perhaps drive them back on the old principle which they deserted—namely, that the State has nothing to do with religion at all, and that its proper functions are entirely secular.

The Archbishops, Bishops, Church dignitaries, and other interested parties, are bestirring themselves in Church defence. Now, when the Radicals are out, is the time to entrench the battlements. They have the men, and money; but, alas, only the money is sound. The men are becoming inferior year and by year, and if this continues, not all its myriad publications, nor all the arts of interested corporations acting in self-defence, can stay its fall. There's still plenty of property in the Church, but the brains are outside.

One thing the clericals understand, and that is, their own interest. They know the crux of the question is in the schools. Let them keep the training of the young, and there will continue to be congregations for the Churches. The Bishop of Wakefield, at the meeting of his Diocesan Association, confined his attention to the schools, and fairly confessed that, if but the Sunday were given to religious training, they could not stem the tide of infidelity. "Education must be bound to the Christian faith." No word of any faith outside Christianity.

We are happy to announce that the supply of candidates for the business of professional impostor is falling off year by year. In 1886 the number of men ordained in the Church of England was 1,605; in 1896, despite increase of population, the number was 1,321. This, the last number published, was the lowest for twenty years, though the population increases by nearly 300,000 every year. Moreover, the quality of the "dull or dishonest" is also said to be materially on the decline, although the requirements extend at the utmost to a university degree, which may easily be dispensed with, and but one year's training at a theological college. Not even the fools of the family will come to the help of the Lord.

Neither Birmingham nor Sheffield will shell-out the shekels requisite to provide them with a resident bishop, and the percentage of confirmations and communicants shows the Church has no real hold on the people, but is merely the resort of a fancied respectability. Priests themselves admit that the average attendance on Sunday mornings is not more than 500 out of 11,000 parishioners, or of 700 out of 20,000, or 250 out of 13,000. The Churchmen may cry: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up!"

No wonder Bishop Moorhouse has again been exhorting to Christian unity. Every attempt in this direction witnesses the pressure from without. Christians think of reunion because the enemy of infidelity is at their gates, if not within their citadel.

The *Christian Commonwealth* strongly denounces the idea of union with the Greek Church. It says: "A Russian priest cannot preach a sermon without first submitting it to the police censors, and adoration of icons is universal wherever Greek Christianity prevails. Intense superstition is blended with fanatical pietism; but the fervor of ritualists constantly ignores ethical obligations. Russia is one of the most religious and most immoral countries in the world."

The stupid papers that announced the approaching beatification of Cardinal Newman were, of course, at sea. The Church moves slowly in such matters; only now is Joan of Arc made "venerable." The person about whom the Pope has issued a decree was John Nepomucene Neumann, a bishop of Philadelphia, who died 1860, and who may be beatified or canonized for that matter, and scarce a living person in this land would care a jot. But the wish, of course, was father to the thought, and now the Catholics say: "Why not? John Henry Newman was as good a saint as many; better, too, than most."

The approaching canonization of the Maid of Orleans makes us ask if the *advocatus diaboli* has looked up the evidence given by Octave Delepierre and M. Lesigne, that Joan never freed France from English rule at all, and, instead of having been burnt to death at Rouen, married a certain Robert des Armorse, settled down happily, and died a natural death!

Dr. Farrar takes himself too seriously. He fancies himself a wonderful innovator, whereas he is only a feeble copyist. He told a *Goodwill* interviewer recently that the sermon, which was the basis of his book called *Eternal Hope*, "sent a thrill over the whole of Great Britain." Freethinkers have denied and denounced the doctrine of Hell for ages,

and Dr. Farrar comes in at the eleventh hour to produce a "thrill" by maintaining that Hell isn't quite so hot as it was fancied, and that its agony is not everlasting, but only eternal. For our part, we don't quite see where the "thrill" comes in; and when Dr. Farrar goes to Hell (this is only a painful supposition) we doubt whether he will experience a "thrill" of gladness on reflecting that he is not there for ever, but only for eternity.

The *Church Times* slashes at Dean Farrar for attending the Wesley House dedication, and still more for saying he was there "in spite of his ecclesiastical critics." It asks him why he offends "those of his own household in order to court popularity with outsiders? And why use language in the City-road which he could not justify in his own cathedral?" "If," it continues, "Dr. Farrar has a mind to pose on Dissenting platforms, nothing will stop him; but he would do well not to quote the Prayer Book in defence of his excursions into schismatic territory." So much for Christian unity.

The canonization of St. Wesley may now be considered complete. We have no wish to act the *advocatus diaboli*, though we cannot forget his upholding of oppression in America, his belief in witchcraft, and his treatment of his wife. But he was a brave and energetic man, who had the courage of his convictions, and worked for them with indefatigable energy. Had Wesley lived to-day, he might, perhaps, have freed himself from the credulity which belonged to his age, and which he rather helped to retain than to remove.

The two-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has produced many encomiums on its work. Yet one wonders if the results are commensurate with the expenditure. Last year 145,205 complete Bibles were issued, 22,075 New Testaments, 324,426 Books of Common Prayer, 8,588,902 other books, and 3,455,583 tracts; the total reaching the huge sum of 12,537,091. With a tenth of the literature we could, we fancy, effect ten times as much as the S. P. C. K.

The S. P. C. K. started at the same time as the East India Company, and that developed into an empire which greatly assisted the operations of the religious body.

In the Canterbury House of Laymen the rights of the laity in settling matters of doctrine and discipline in the Church of England have been energetically put forward; but in the York House of Laymen, Lord Halifax, president of the English Church Union, maintained that the real governing body was the Episcopate; while Sir Henry Bemrose complained they had bishops who did not govern, and clergy who would not obey. Churchmen of all opinions, however, seem to ignore the fact that the Church is a State-made institution, and the real governing power is legally settled on the Crown and Parliament.

The *Daily News* says: "Two bishops, with seats in the House of Lords, on Tuesday strolled across the Lobby, and were passing the door of the House of Commons, on their way to the Peers' Gallery, to hear the debate on the second reading of the Benefices Bill, when their progress was stopped by one of the door-keepers. 'Why cannot we enter? We are members of the House of Lords, and entitled to seats in the Peers' Gallery,' asked the bishops, in amazement. The door-keeper firmly replied that the Speaker was at prayers, and that during prayers there was no admission even for bishops."

Dr. Guinness Rogers is the Ancient Merchants' Lecturer for the present month. He is holding forth at the Dutch Church, Austin-friars, on such subjects as Infidelity, Indifference, and the Materialism of the Present Age. We should be happy to find Dr. Rogers a fit (sceptical) audience for such lectures—if he only allowed discussion after them. Preaching to believers is all very well, but why not try a call to the unconverted?

A stranger entered St. Silas's Church, High Park-street, Liverpool, and was conducted to a pew. He took off his overcoat and laid a revolver on the place in front of him which was meant to hold a prayer-book. He was told, however, that this was quite out of order; but this he denied, for it was his intention to shoot the preacher. He said that the clergy had their "knife in him," and he meant to be quits with them. His little game was spoiled by the advent of a policeman, and Canon Woodward is still a pilgrim in this miserable vale of tears.

William Wood, an old marine-store dealer at Chiswick, being annoyed by the chaffing of some children, got a gun charged with twelve-bore shot and fired right and left among his tormentors, wounding five of them, and two so seriously that they had to be taken to the hospital, where they lay for some time in a critical condition. The old man himself was taken to the police-station. Perhaps he had



been reading about Elisha, whose bald head excited the ridicule of a swarm of youngsters, which so incensed him that he called bears out of the wood to kill no less than forty-two of them. Everybody knows, of course, that the Bible is the only proper text-book of morality; still, it is rather awkward to find Hebrew prophets imitated on the banks of the Thames.

A poor unfortunate at Granville, Vermont, by the name of Elmer Woodward, committed suicide by hanging on a bed-post, because his wife refused to read the Bible to him. Life, it would seem, was not worth living without that book.

Benjamin Reeves, a gentleman of independent means, residing at Peckham Park-road, South London, suffered from softening of the brain. He imagined that the devil slept with him, and stood before him when he tried to pray. He seems to have been suffocated while in a paroxysm of fear. So the jury found, but they said nothing of the beauty of the Christian belief in the agency of devils, which the medical man regarded as an hallucination.

William Henry Mann, who shot two of his fellow employees at Messrs. H. A. Goodall and Co.'s, 7 Bartlett's-buildings, Holborn, and afterwards shot himself dead in Richmond Park, has been found by the coroner's jury to have committed "suicide during temporary insanity." Among other scribbles on pieces of paper discovered in his pocket was this: "His mind was on heaven, but hell engulfed him." The poor fellow was evidently a true believer; not an Atheist, as the Talmage philosophy would lead one to expect.

At Stevens's, on Monday, was a sale of Benin curiosities. Among them the catalogue gives the following item: Small ivory tusk, stained with human gore, with Ju-Ju marks on the back, found in a compound belonging to the priests, and formed one of the ornaments of the altars upon which human victims were offered up with a hideous and sacred brutality. "Sacred brutality" is, like the rest of the sentence, faithfully reproduced from the catalogue. There is also advertised a Ju-Ju nail used for crucifixions. M. Gaidoz, some time since, pointed to similarities between religious observances in ancient Rome and in Congo; and crucifixion seems to have been among them. It possibly arose from nailing up the carcasses of animals on trees, in order to warn others off.

The Rev. C. Jones, the Baptist minister of Liverpool and Cardiff, who starved his wife and tried to force her to prostitute herself on the streets, has got what he desired—a divorce. What he deserves—well that, perhaps, can be left to all who know him.

At Plymouth Police-court, Edward Masson Baston, described as a clerk in holy orders, was charged on remand with obtaining money by false pretences from the proprietors of Westminster Hotel, Plymouth, and private boarding-houses at Plymouth and Ivybridge. In each case he described himself as Archdeacon Masson Baston, and stated he was a Colonial clergyman in receipt of a pension from the India Office. He presented cheques in payment of his accounts, which were not honored. Mr. Durant, of the India Office, said he knew nothing of the accused, who was not in receipt of a pension. Accused was committed for trial.

The Rev. J. H. Philips, a popular married Baptist of Athens, Tennessee, is wanted, having eloped with the goods and girl of a prominent citizen.

Rev. W. Harry Felts, aged thirty-five, Freewill Baptist minister, is under arrest at Leitchfield, Ky., charged with bigamy. He had been holding meetings there for the last two months, and on Friday married a seventeen-year-old girl there. He left the city on Sunday, intending to go to Cairo, Ill., but with his bride was intercepted at Horse Branch and brought back. The cause of his arrest was a letter from Randolph County, Ark., alleging that Felts had married a woman there and had deserted her, leaving her destitute.

The following paragraph appeared in the "Post Bag" of the *South Wales Daily Post*: "The latest, and not the least appropriate, definition of religion is: 'Insurance against fire in the next world.' Policies are being rapidly taken up. The joint superintendents for the Swansea district seem to be the Rev. Cadle Davies and the Rev. Burwyn Davies."

This was the occasion of a scene at the last meeting of the Swansea Board of Guardians. A school question arose, and Mr. Mason, one of the Guardians, said: "I see that Mr. Davies is connected with an insurance company." The Rev. John Davies (fiercely): "You are going to hell if you say that. I have never said anything about it. The *Daily Post* said that the Rev. Burwyn Davies and me were insurance

agents for hell. You, and your beer; you are going to hell; you know more about it than I do. I am afraid to go there; I am trying to keep people away from there, but I am afraid I will never keep you from there." At this stage everything was in the greatest confusion, and all the members were trying to speak at once. Mr. Davies, who had made the row, exclaimed: "Are ministers to be treated like this?"

Among the latest religious crazes is the society of "The Daughters of the King"—the said King being Jesus Christ. This is, at any rate, an improvement on the language of the pious Song of Solomon, that finds an echo in the beautiful hymn, "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," which is still sung with fervor at Salvation and other holy meetings. "The Daughters of the King" are devoted to the spread of Christ's kingdom among women. The society was started twelve years ago in America, where it now has 12,000 members. The movement has lately extended to England. No doubt it will find more or less exciting occupation for women who have nothing better to do.

The Papacy is still yearning for the restoration of its temporal power, but "Providence" seems on the side of its enemies. Fifty years have rolled by since the Italian army "desecrated" the Holy City, and the event has just been celebrated with pomp and rejoicing. King Humbert's speech to a representative audience ended with the words: "Italian Rome is inviolable." Dreadful words for the poor old Pope in his Vatican prison!

The war in Cuba carries famine in its train. Men, women, and children are reported as starving without any assistance from their heavenly father.

The *Spectator* has always been a stickler for "design," but in telling of the silent warfare of the submarine world it does not explain how the facts fit in with omnibenevolence. Here is what it says: "Time would fail to tell of the ravages of the swordfish, also a mackerel of great size and ferocity, who launches himself torpedo-like at the bulky whale, the scavenger-shark, or a comrade, with strict impartiality. And of the 'killer' whale, eater of the tongue only of the mysticetus; the thresher-shark, aider and abettor of the killer; or the sawfish, who disembowels his prey that his feeble teeth may have tender food. Their warfare knows no armistice; they live but to eat and be eaten in their turn, and, as to eat they must fight, the battle rages evermore. The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty, but they are peaceful compared with the dark places of the sea."

The rattle of the sabre is still loud in France. A cavalry captain named Bégouen wrote a coarse and insolent letter to M. Trarieux, a Senator and a former Cabinet minister, who is in favor of a new trial for Dreyfus. The letter was even threatening, and M. Trarieux submitted it to General Billot, the Minister of War, who did not condescend to reprimand the writer. Thereupon an appeal was made to M. Loubet, the President of the Senate, and Captain Bégouen was formally censured. Had the Senator written such a letter to the officer, he would have been liable to fine and imprisonment for "insulting the army." But soldiers are licensed to do anything in France just now, and if their impudence is not checked it will soon be goodbye to the Republic.

The Paris correspondent of the *Journal de Bruxelles*, a Roman Catholic paper, frankly admits that "the conception of a St. Bartholomew Night, not indeed against the Huguenots, but against the Jews, has struck all heads in France with the speed and force of a flash of lightning." This writer predicts that, in certain contingencies, the Jews in France would be "strangled, drowned, shot, or stabbed to the very last man." Not that this Catholic scribe is terrified at such a prospect. Quite the contrary. He expresses a hope that "all mischievous foreign elements" may be expelled from France. "Protestants, Freethinkers, Socialists, Anarchists, and Freemasons," he says, "I would readily, and so would all my acquaintance, fire the first shot at all these rogues." How these Christians love one another! is not exactly true; but how they hate everybody else! is truer than their gospel.

Signor Cavallotti, the great Italian Radical leader, has been killed in a duel with Signor Macola, a rabid Conservative. Signor Cavallotti had fought thirty-five duels before. The thirty-sixth was unlucky. How strange it is that this barbarous practice of duelling should linger in "civilized" countries. And what a ridiculous ending it is to a distinguished career to be slain in a vulgar, personal quarrel.

Colonel Picquart, one of Zola's witnesses, has had to fight a duel with Colonel Henry, a witness for the prosecution. Picquart disabled his adversary—which, making allowance for the folly of duelling, is rather satisfactory.



Poor Dreyfus only suffers the more for the efforts that are made for his relief—of which, by the way, he is in complete ignorance. Not only is he barred and bolted in his cell on the Devil's Island, but each grated window has been filled up with a second grating; and for some time, says the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, he has been made to lie at night on a plank bed with his feet chained to a cannon ball. It is frankly admitted in the *Gaulois*, an anti-Dreyfus paper, that the prisoner cannot live much longer. His letters to his wife are getting rarer, his mind and body are giving way, and he is quite a physical wreck. This prolonged and exquisite torture of Dreyfus is a disgrace to France and a scandal to civilization. And those who are responsible for it may yet suffer a terrible nemesis. France may pass through her present attack of dementia sooner than some people imagine; she may then come to regard Dreyfus as a martyr, and punish the men who shamed her in the face of the world.

English Jews are, on the whole, too comfortable to take much stock in Zionism, and the Conference last Sunday was rather conspicuous by the absence of any leaders of the chosen people of Israel. The well-off English Jew has quite another vision of Zion than that enjoyed by the poor persecuted Israelite in Russia.

There has been a rumpus among the converted Jews of the East London Mission with regard, of course, to the expenditure of the £3,000 a year. Mr. Ruvitch, a converted Jew, got in a row with one Josephs, and another Cohen detained him and his wife for three-quarters of an hour in the church, threatening them with arrest by order of the Rev. Mr. Rosenthal, the pastor. Ruvitch brought an action against the Rev. Mr. Rosenthal for £50 for false imprisonment, but Judge French failed to see that he was responsible for the action of Cohen, and the case was dismissed.

In Germany, during the last five years, 1,239 persons have been sentenced to 2,250 years of imprisonment for offending against the Emperor. The minimum sentence is two months in a civil prison, the maximum five years in a fortress. The majority of the sufferers were workmen. The newspapers are full of stories of the absurd way in which the law of *lèse majesté* is worked. The following story is circulating everywhere: "An American, hearing of some freak of the Emperor, exclaimed on the street: 'The Emperor is a damned fool!' A detective, speaking English, stepped up, tapped him on the shoulder, and said: 'I arrest you. You must komm mit me.' 'Why?' asked the American. 'You have insulted His Majesty the Emperor.' 'I was talking about the Russian Emperor,' said the American. 'No, sir; that will not do,' said the detective. 'There is no Emperor a damned fool but His Majesty the German Emperor.'"

The Burgomaster of Schkenditz has fined a man 1s. 6d. for not wearing his best clothes on Sunday, and that notwithstanding the fact that he had just been returning from his work at some stables.

*Reynolds's Newspaper* remarks: "Somebody draws attention to certain utterances by Mrs. Besant 'On Prayer.' We ask with great regret, having in view the noble life of this woman for years, is anything she says at the present time worth serious consideration? She will always remain an interesting personality, but her intelligence is roaming among the phantoms in the cloudland of ghostly superstition."

The *English Mechanic* mentions the exposure at Narbonne of the clairvoyante who professed to read through sealed envelopes, and so thoroughly succeeded in humbugging Dr. Ferroul. A commission appointed by the Montpellier Academy of Science and Literature has recently been investigating this respectable medium's claims to quasi-miraculous sight, with the *n*-times-repeated result of all scientific inquiries into the reality of such alleged phenomena: that the person through whose mediumship they are supposed to occur is an impostor.

Utterly failing to read two sealed letters in the possession of the members of the commission, the clairvoyante did succeed in describing, more or less accurately, the contents of a sealed box left at Dr. Ferroul's house, after an interval of an hour and a half, during which her sister had gone to and fro, and the medium herself had, more than once, left the room. But the committee had taken the precaution to enclose a half-exposed photographic plate in the sealed box, and, on developing this, it was at once seen that it had been exposed to the light, and that hence, during the hour and a half, the box had been opened, of which, by-the-by, its external condition furnished further evidence.

The Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society who reports this says: "I recur to this, to me, distasteful subject, because the Spiritualistic imposture is, even yet, only

scotched and not killed, and I hold it to be the duty of every scientific man to do his utmost to warn others against reposing the slightest confidence in the lying miracles reported through the spiritualistic press. That *populus vult decipi* we know, alas, only too well; but, for goodness' sake, do not let us add *decipiatur*."

All the Theosophical societies of America had a convention at Chicago last week, which resulted in investing Mrs. Katherine Tingley with the mantle of Madame Blavatsky, and in the organization of a society called the Universal Brotherhood.

The Lord Mayor of Liverpool "let in" the Feast of the Lesser Bairam at the Muslim Institute, and now the Liverpudlians are asking how many hours will be his share in Paradise.

The widow, whose "barrel of meal wasted not, neither did her cruse of oil fail," seems to have a counterpart in Scotland. The returns of Scotch whisky production shows that some 28,000,000 gallons were manufactured there last year. Of these some 30,000,000 are needed for Scotch consumption, another 30,000,000 came to England, fully as much was exported to Canada and the States, and yet as much again to Africa, Australia, India, and other colonies. And some people will not believe in miracles!

Virchow, in a recent address at Moscow, laid it down that, so far as we can observe, life is but inherited life. As to the origin of life, there are but two solutions—creation or spontaneous generation. We have no experience of either. He continued: "It may be objected that the first life must be considered as having come into existence in a disconnected manner. Such an objection cannot be refuted; but it has, and can have, no significance, except in reference to the awakening of the first life. Neither we nor others have ever observed such an awakening. It is possible, even probable, that there has been a first life on the earth; but science is not called to discuss that possibility. It is not our duty to think out a plan of the universe; we are only responsible for carefully observing and faithfully holding what we do observe."

St. Andrew's, Undershaft, vacant by the death of the Bishop of Bedford, is worth £2,000 a year and a house. The house, being let as offices, brings in a tidy addition to the revenue.

The *Church Times* was horrified by a Nonconformist sermon, entitled a modern parable, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto the London County Council." But the *Church Times* itself encourages the mass in masquerade and all the paraphernalia of Ritualism, which turns the Church into a place of entertainment.

The energetic ex-Cowley Father Black again interfered in the announced marriage of Lieut.-Colonel Ramsay, an innocent person divorced from his late wife and another lady; and now he writes gleefully to the *Church Times*: "These persons had the good sense to get 'married' at the registry office, the man having a canonical wife living." The putting of "married" in quotation marks presumably indicates that Father Black holds that civil marriage is none at all, in which belief, shared by many High Churchmen, he has the misfortune to be at issue with the law of the land he resides in.

Some of Clement Scott's critics have placed in parallel columns his utterance in *Great Thoughts*, that "it is nearly impossible for a woman to remain pure who has adopted the stage as a profession," with that in *St. Peter's Magazine*, that "it would be a ridiculous exaggeration to say that a religious life and a stage life are incompatible." But there is no contradiction. Every Roman Catholic ought to know that to lead "a religious life" and "to remain pure" are totally different things.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer has returned to England from a preaching tour in the United States. While at Washington he had the honor of opening a meeting of the Senate with prayer. It is not reported whether the deliberations of that body were particularly sensible on that occasion. It was a good advertisement for Mr. Meyer, anyhow.

The proposal to get the charters of Australian universities altered so as to allow them to confer divinity degrees is one which was, sooner or later, to be expected. But it is one which should be none the less strenuously opposed, on the simple grounds that a university is a State institution, and that the State—an absolutely secular institution—doesn't, or shouldn't, know anything whatever about so-called divinity. It is the business of the State to provide instruction only, either in what can be known, or in what is of demonstrable benefit to the mind of man; and divinity not only deals with what cannot possibly be known, but has ever been the greatest clog upon true intellectual advancement.—*Sydney Bulletin*.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, March 13, Athenæum Hall, London: 7.30, "Heaven and Hell: their Situation, Climate, Constitution, and Inhabitants."

April 17, Huddersfield.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 13, Camberwell; 27, Bolton; 30 and 31, Debate at Portsmouth. May 1, Glasgow; 8, Birmingham.—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.

A. MORTIMER.—Mr. Forder can supply Scott's *Life of Jesus*.

H. PERCY WARD.—Addition made as requested. Sorry to hear of the Derby disadvantages. We reciprocate your good wishes.

R. E. HOLDEN.—There does not appear to be any special law of "copyright" in titles. A title is treated as a trade mark, and injunctions and damages are grounded on actual, proved usage. Two papers might be started simultaneously with the same title, and neither could be stopped. If you started a paper in London called the *Times*, the proprietors of the old-established journal of that name could suppress you, because they could prove that their journal was well known under that title, and that the similarity of name led people to buy your venture in mistake for theirs. In the case you mention, registration of title amounts to nothing without publication. If it did, one man might go and register every noun in the dictionary.

G. W. B.—No doubt insanity has increased in civilized countries, but this has nothing to do with the spread of scepticism. It is partly due to the accelerated pace of modern life, and partly to the drinking habits of Christian nations. The increase, however, is not quite as great as it appears. Statistics are now more carefully compiled, and since the establishment of good asylums fewer lunatics are cared for privately.

J. GREEVZ FISHER.—Will try to supply address of Postal Reform League next week.

H. ORGAN.—We acknowledge papers that reach us. We do not recollect any local paper coming to hand from your city for many months. There is a mistake or a miscarriage somewhere.

R. FRANKFIELD.—If you want to make the acquaintance of the golden-mouthed Jeremy Taylor, and your time is limited, we advise you to read his sermons. They are magnificent compositions. His *Doctor Dubitantium* is the greatest Protestant work on casuistry, and displays extraordinary powers of mind and language. It is only accessible, we believe, in the collected editions of his writings. One may disbelieve all Taylor's theology, and yet admire his genius and profit by his secular teaching.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Carleton and Netherford Branch (per W. Heaford), 7s. 6d.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—W. W. Pearce, 5s.

STUDENT.—Works like Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God* are necessarily expensive, as they appeal to a relatively small circle of purchasers. Try to get such books at your local Free Library. If they are not on the shelves, keep putting them down in the list of books wanted for reading. Pegging away often does a great deal. There is a certain force in mere importunity.

C. WRIGHT.—Florrie Cook, afterwards Mrs. Corner, was the medium who convinced Prof. Crookes of the truth of spiritism. She was caught by Sir G. Sitwell and Carl von Buch impersonating a spirit in Jan., 1880, and a report appeared in the *Times* of Jan. 12 of that year. The confession of the Fox sisters was published in the *New York Herald* in Sept., 1888.

G. P.—A probable derivation of the word "heaven" makes it the place heaven, heaved, or lifted up above the earth. Papers and jokes are always welcome.

G. L. M.—Many thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Huddersfield Examiner—Truthseeker—South Wales Post—Awakener of India—People's Newspaper—Crescent—Liberator—New York Public Opinion—De Dageraad—Isle of Man Times—Glasgow Saturday Weekly Citizen—Free Opinion—Boston Investigator—Blue Grass Blade—Torch of Reason—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Liberator.

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

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

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.

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

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

A CAPITAL audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on Zola's *Paris*. Miss Brown occupied the chair, which was a pleasant innovation. The lecture was followed with profound attention, and the passages from Zola's novel expressing his condemnation of Christianity, and his belief in a coming religion of humanity, were evidently much relished. Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (March 13), taking for his subject "Heaven and Hell: their Situation, Climate, Constitution, and Inhabitants." This is a subject that ought to be very interesting to Christians. Freethinkers should try to bring their orthodox friends along to this lecture.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures this evening, Sunday, March 13, in the Secular Hall, 61 New Church-road, Camberwell. He takes for his subject, "Can God Do Wrong?"

*De Dageraad* for March has some good articles. Elie Reclus writes on some old superstitions under the title, "Nachtelyke Verschijningen" ("Nocturnal Apparitions"), and Professor Georges Renard discusses the old question, "Is Man Free?" Under the title, "Romances of the Future," the editor, A. H. Gerard, discusses the works of Bellamy and Mantegazza. Mr. Wheeler's tract on "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil" is translated into Dutch, and appears in this number.

January 29 was the birthday of our gallant colleague, Mr. Joseph Symes, of Melbourne. On that day he was fifty-seven years old. Writing to us then, in a letter which has just arrived, he says that he has got well through his troublesome illnesses of last year, and feels as fit for work as ever. "I weigh fifteen stone," he says, "but do not feel a bit lumpish." He is back again in the Hall of Science, and hopes he will stay there, though he does not quite feel at the end of all his difficulties. Mr. Symes expresses a wish to visit England for a few months before his "vigor is gone." But that calamity, we hope, will not happen for many a year; though, of course, we should all be happy to see "Joseph" over here for a while, and the sooner the better.

Mr. Wallace Nelson, who left England for the antipodes some twelve years ago, edits *The People's Newspaper*. In a number of that journal just to hand we notice a friendly reference to Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword*—the edition published by the Humanitarian League. "Mr. Foote," it is added, "is the English successor of Mr. Bradlaugh, and shares much of his sturdy Radicalism."

For a "dying Society" the N. S. S. keeps up wonderfully. Seventy-seven new members were admitted at the last meeting of the Executive.

Mr. D. Baxter, a member of the Glasgow Branch committee, has consented to use a portion of his shop for the sale of Freethought literature. Mr. Baxter is a hairdresser, and it is to be hoped that the new departure will not frighten away his customers; or, if it does, that others will take their places. His shop is very centrally situated at 72a Glassford-street. He intends to make a fair display of Freethought books, pamphlets, and papers in the window; and he will doubtless be patronised by many of our Glasgow readers who, owing to certain circumstances, may have recently experienced some difficulty in obtaining their weekly *Freethinker*. Mr. Baxter, we may add, has long been a hard-working committee-man of the Glasgow Branch, and the local "saints" should give him their support.

Zola's *Paris* is circulating well, in spite of the fanaticism against him in France. The foreign demand more than compensates for the attempted boycott at home. No less than 68,000 copies were subscribed for on the day of publication.

Zola's letter to the Young Men of France contains the following noble passage: "Oh, young men, young men! remember, I entreat, the great work which awaits you. You are the workmen of the future; it is you who will determine the character of the twentieth century; it is you who, we earnestly hope, will solve the problems of truth and equity that the dying century propounds. We, the old, the elder men, hand on to you the formidable results of our investigations, many contradictions, much, perhaps, which is obscure, but certainly the most strenuous effort which ever century made to reach the light, the most faithful and solidly based documents, and the very foundations of the vast edifice of science, which you must continue to build up for your own honor and happiness. All we ask of you is to be more generous, more emancipated of mind than were we; to leave us behind in your love of a wholesome life, in your ardor for work, in the fecundity through which man



and the earth will produce at length an overflowing harvest of joy beneath the glorious sunshine. And we should make way for you, fraternally glad to go and take our rest after the day's toil in the sound sleep of death, if we knew that you would carry on our work and realize our dreams."

*Public Opinion* of New York (Feb. 24), under the title of "Freethinkers and Roman Catholic Growth in England," prints the whole of the paragraphs which appeared on this subject in our issue of Jan. 16.

Mr. Herkomer, the famous artist, has completed a fine portrait of Mr. Herbert Spencer, the cost having been defrayed by a number of subscribers, including Mr. Balfour, Mr. John Morley, Sir Joseph Hooker, and the Duke of Argyll. Some of them are antagonistic to Mr. Spencer's views, but all are at one in recognising his great intellectual powers, the immense effect he has produced upon the world's thought by his writings, and "the high moral qualities which have enabled him to concentrate those powers for so many years upon a purpose worthy of them, and in spite of all obstacles to carry out so vast a design." Mr. Herkomer's portrait of the philosopher of Evolution is said to be an admirable likeness. It will be exhibited at the Royal Academy this summer.

Tuesday's *Daily News* devoted more than a column to a review of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Autobiography. It called her "a grand old lady," and paid her other compliments, but discreetly omitted to notice that she is a Freethinker and the chief worker on the heretical *Woman's Bible*.

The Derby Branch has done a lot of good work; so much, indeed, that it has excited local bigotry to a fanatical pitch, and the boycott is being used against it most unscrupulously. Halls that were once available are now refused. Mr. Percy Ward's engagement for a week's mission in the town has had to be cancelled on this account. Let us hope the boycott will be broken down somehow. At any rate, we understand, the Branch will try an open-air campaign during the summer.

## THE CLERICAL FACE.

(Concluded from page 149.)

It cannot be denied that Christian training develops a vicious instinct, and, accordingly, shapes the human features. The mind cannot entertain a more vicious thought than that of an eternal hell. From this idea Christianity develops hate, bigotry, egotism, selfishness, intolerance, persecution, and even massacre. Just as the common cur, from the long training and practice of baiting bulls, developed a thick neck, heavy shoulders, and a vicious countenance, so have the abnormal and vicious thoughts of the punishment of hell, the selfishness of special salvation, and the intolerance of opposition developed in the priesthood a distinct type of man, of vicious countenance and combative nature. Again, as the vicious features of the bull-dog, both of face and body, change in form with the change of mental occupation, likewise the brutal face of the priest, and the hard, intolerant face of the preacher, take on an expression of benevolence and sympathy, just as they cast aside the morbid, cruel thoughts to which they have accustomed themselves to believing. The laity do not have this form and expression of feature, simply because their minds less constantly dwell upon the cruel and vicious tenets of religion. Such expression, however, is never lacking in those of the laity who grow fanatical and intolerant. The moment that such thoughts become the controlling influence of the mind, that moment the face is marked with the hardness of intolerance, and the jaws set with the vindictive and relentless grip of the bull-dog.

Religion springs from ignorance; the practice of it from fear. Fear develops combativeness. Combativeness develops intolerance. Intolerance develops selfishness and hate. All these naturally provide a punishment for the opposition of thought. Long and constant association of the mind with these primary instincts and principles of religion cannot help but imbrute the countenance. The faces of such men are not naturally human, because they do not associate the mind with nature. Instead, their minds are employed in investigating the supernatural, entertaining the fear of hell, and devising a cruel punishment for those of opposing opinions. The inevitable result is that every orthodox clerical countenance is stamped,

more or less, with the brand of malignant cruelty. It becomes the restless reserve of his being. That he does not employ it at the present time, as in the past, is only from lack of opportunity and power. But there it exists, latent and slumbering, as seen in their faces. There is only wanting a large physical majority, and the feeling of security, to ignite this inflammable religious instinct into a blaze of righteous vindictiveness. What other could be the governing instinct of people who worship a God, who is himself an eternal torturer? Such instincts are written as plainly upon the face as music, or art, or cunning, or avariciousness on any other controlling thought, and accordingly shape the features. Look at the orthodox priest face, low-browed, beefy, vicious, cunning, and sensual. Look at the orthodox preacher face—hard, severe, lean, grinding, brutal, intolerant, and vindictive. Both alike bear plainly the marks of the bull-dog, the executioner, the impostor, and the scamp. The chief distinction between the priest face and the preacher face is that one is bloated and the other is not. Were the look of intemperance added to the preacher countenance, it would be the more repulsive and forbidding of the two.

As before stated, any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features. What a difference is seen between the orthodox clerical face and the unorthodox clerical face.

There are many clerical faces, serene, peaceful, and humane in expression, and stamped with a high order of benevolence and intellectuality. But in every instance this change of feature from the brute to the human is due to discarding from the mind the idea of an avenging God; to their refusal to impute to the Almighty atrocities which they themselves would not commit; and, further, to their acquired liberality of opinions, and association of the mind with art, science, nature, current literature, and the intellectual drift of the times.

Doubtless the human face is the most interesting of all studies, the grandest of all mysteries. Addison thus describes it: "Nature has laid out all her art in beautifying the face. She has touched it with vermilion, planted it with a double row of ivory, made it the seat of smiles and blushes, lightened it up, and enlivened it with the brightness of the eyes, hung it on each side with curious organs of sense, given it airs and graces that cannot be described, and surrounded it with such a flowing shade of hair as to set all its beauties in the most agreeable light."

That nature is the most skilful artist all artists freely admit. She tints the lily with a gossamer brush, all too fine for human hold or touch; tangles the moonlight in a rippling stream; paints, in myriad blendings, glorious October forest foliage; shapes and colors the human face with charms unspeakable, over which play, like summer winds billowing the ripening fields, every human emotion—the lively thoughts, the tell-tale love, and the unconscious blush. In countless thousands of her works thus nature defies all imitation. But, like the artist class, Nature is often capricious and eccentric. She has her moods of sunshine and shadow, of storm and repose, of likes and dislikes. It is certain she did not hide her temper when she cast the besotted and brutal countenance which characterizes the Catholic priesthood; or the sinister, glaring, diabolical leer which is stamped upon the face of the orthodox Puritan. One of nature's inexorable laws is, that every abuse has its readable shame. When the mind or body is abused by the indulgence of impure, inhuman, cruel, and vindictive thoughts, or by physical excesses, Nature is swift in her punishment, and the dungeon of the heart lets every vice escape that it may be seen at the windows of the face.

The clerical face, then, marked and stamped with sensuality, intolerance, intellectual domination, hate, the revenge of hell, cunning, and hypocrisy, is but nature's plain and unmistakable seal of disapproval of the secret violations and abuses which both body and mind have suffered.

It is a law of nature that every type of man shall possess a face to correspond with his thoughts and profession. The clerical face, in some respects, is an acquired exception. While bearing the marks of a well-trained piety, a peculiar blending of trickery is seen to mingle with its saintly expression of devotion. It has that "smile and still be a villain" expression that no other face has. There is that about it which excites distrust, instead of confidence. This peculiar type of face must greatly change if the Christian religion would make further pro-



gression among the educated masses. It is only through fear of it that it commands reverence and tribute to-day from the ignorant laity. The world is fast learning that it is a face with hell pictured in it; a face with an evil purpose; a trained and educated face, such as Lady Macbeth, with the murder of Duncan in her heart, directed her lord to wear:—

Your face, my Thane, is a book where men  
May read strange matters; to beguile the time,  
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,  
Your hand, your tongue; look like the innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under it.

—*Free Thought Magazine.*

J. B. WILSON, M.D.

### THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

THERE is no great room to expect the formation of new and more highly-endowed races of men; but, nevertheless, this need not impair the prospect of the progressive development of humanity, and of the human race itself. The progress remains the same, or becomes still more considerable; but the mode or the means by which it is attained are different. While the struggle between peoples was formerly a contest of weapons, strength of body, courage, and ferocity, it now consists in emulation in good and useful arts, in discoveries, contrivances, and sciences. The time is past in which one people subjugated another, or exterminated it to take its place; it is not by destruction, but by peaceable competition, that one can obtain a superiority over the other. But by this means that uniformity of culture and that intermixture of races are brought about which so powerfully oppose the separation of new species. The advancing development of the human race will not therefore, in future, occur solely or chiefly in particular races destined eventually to subject or displace the others, as has hitherto been the case; but it will constitute a uniform acquisition of the whole species. How far humanity itself will at the same time undergo development may be difficult to determine beforehand; but, in harmony with the change in the nature of the struggle for existence, this development will certainly be rather intellectual than corporeal; or, in other words, it will advance *puri passu* with a greater evolution of the tendencies and faculties now slumbering in the brain of man. For, as now-a-days, man carries on his struggle for existence chiefly by means of this organ; and this will be the case more and more hereafter, so the beneficial and propulsive consequences of this struggle will also be favorable to this organ and its activity; as, indeed, we know from experience it has been in the past. Even backward peoples or races, when, favored by their small personal requirements, they come into competition with civilized man (as in the case of the Chinese and Africans in America), can only stand this competition permanently when they at the same time adopt all the existing aids of civilization, and follow the same general course by which humanity is at present striving to reach its ideal of civilization. But by this means they also are carried away—perhaps unwillingly, or at least unconsciously—by the general movement of civilization which has been set going by the more highly-developed brain of the Europeans, and thus sink more or less as especially characterized races.

So far it would appear that all the momenta which are connected with the progress and dissemination of civilization over the earth's surface are less in favor of the formation of new races of man than of the diffusion of a more or less uniform type of high human culture; and this would also be the issue of human development which, in accordance with the general principles of humanity and justice, must appear most desirable. The suppression of a lowly race or people by a higher or more powerful one has always produced such a mass of misery and injustice that the repetition of such a process can only evoke the most disagreeable sensations in every friend of humanity. In the present state of the human conscience such suppressions as this would appear to be doubly cruel and lamentable, even though the replacement of the inferior by a higher or better type must in itself be regarded as just. But, inasmuch as this displacement or replacement may take place under present circumstances without acts of violence, and merely by the irresistible power of conviction, the common and uniform progress of humanity has become a

more probable course than that of the suppression of races. At present, indeed, mere example generally suffices among civilized nations of the earth to render every progress, every improvement, every increase of knowledge, common property.

Thus, in the lapse of time, and by the progress of civilization, the struggle for the means of existence, such as we witness in all its unmitigated violence in the life of animals, and in the lower stages of human development, has become rather a struggle for existence itself, and a contention both of individuals and of peoples for the acquisition of the highest earthly benefits, in which we have to do less with mutual suppression than with mutual competition and overreaching.

DR. L. BÜCHNER.

### THE ROMAN CATACOMBS.

It is now reported that the Catacombs underlying Rome are to be lighted by electricity. Do the powers that be having this matter in charge know what they are doing? Those underground chambers for the dead, in the days of Rome's greatest glory and grandeur, were the burial places of her distinguished dead. They were sacred to Mithras, to Bacchus, and, in later times, to Isis and her son Horus. They have been doctored and made to bear false witness in the interest of Christianity. The flickering light of a tallow dip, or the rude earthen lamps of the ancients, doing duty even in modern times, were sufficient to show where earlier inscriptions had been covered with plaster and painted over with Bible scenes. Resting places of imaginary martyrs were made to do duty for the cicerones who told pitiful tales of innumerable Christian martyrs who had been fed to wild beasts, tortured and torn limb from limb, and whose remains had been gathered in the night and given Christian burial in these artificial caverns. All these stories are basely fraudulent, and the electric lights will make them more apparent than ever.

That distinguished Christian author, Rev. Mr. Withrow, who visited those relics in the long ago, and who published a handsome volume entitled *Catacombs of Rome*, giving an account of his own observations, on p. 373, says: "In the whole range of inscriptions only five, some of which may be spurious, commemorate martyrs."

On p. 21 he says: "It has been computed the entire number in the catacombs were seven millions." Only five of these, "some of these may be spurious," are martyrs. And the very small remainder will prove not to have been martyrs when examined in the just light of modern science and impartial criticism.

It may not be improper to add in this connection that the real martyrs of the ages have been those of science, of which Bruno, Vanini, Galileo, Savonarola, and Servetus were distinguished examples. Christian factions murdering each other, as Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, Rogers, and the thousands of others burned at the stake, cannot pass as Christian martyrs, but victims of Christian hate. How many similar unfortunates, tortured and murdered, found secret sepulchre in the Catacombs, it is not probable the electric lights will reveal.

—*Progressive Thinker.*

### ANECDOTES OF FREETHINKERS.

HARRIET MARTINEAU was apt at a retort. A lady once said to her: "Women ought to attend to their little duties, and let public affairs alone." She replied: "Those who perform their great duties best are most likely to perform their little duties best." "Oh, certainly," assented the lady; "but some women think they have missions to perform on earth; if I felt so, I think I ought to be sent to Bedlam." Miss Martineau answered: "It appears to me those who think they have no mission to perform on earth ought to be sent to Bedlam."

One day a young man dropped in upon Walt Whitman at his humble home in Camden, N.J., introduced himself as a poet, and begged to be allowed permission to read selections from a bundle of manuscripts which he carried. "No, thank you," said Whitman, courteously, but firmly; "I have been paralysed twice."

"Have you made your peace with God?" was said to Thoreau. "Never knew we had any quarrel."

If God could exist without a cause, then the world could also exist without a cause—that is, be the cause of itself. If you can imagine a God who existed without the world from eternity, then you can much easier imagine a world that existed from eternity without God.—*Karl Heinzen.*



## OUR BELIEF.

Who is to decide whether we believe in religion or scepticism? The efficacy and truth of a doctrine lies in its practicability, its results, and its utility. Examine religion by these methods, and what is the effect?—that we have no cause for maintaining it. To-day is not the Church simply an institution which claims everything good, takes all it can get, and in return gives us confusion and trouble? Does its teaching ennoble and uplift us? To these questions there is but one answer—No. Those who claim to have risen through the influence of the Church have not that to thank, but humanity. Can they truly say that without worldly advantages they would have succeeded? It is not possible for man to prosper honestly without diligent effort; but, when this is once put into practice, religion is unnecessary for his happiness and morality. What is the effect of Secularism on its followers? It teaches us not to look to others to provide the necessaries of life; that all men are equals so far as morality is concerned; that men should be ethical, not for what reward they may receive after death, but because it is essential to the well-being of the race.

In our daily routine the one who thinks deeply generally succeeds; but knowledge and reason go together before results can be depended upon to be good, and we cannot imagine a man to be a thinker without a reasoner. But the great point is this: Will one specific set of doctrines allow all men to believe them? Such an idea is absurd, because we cannot believe as we like. Belief is governed by the amount of evidence brought under our notice in connection with any subject. Secularism involves all shades of thought; it is not limited to special dogmas, and is practicable. It is not preached without being practised, and, as the result, its adherents are not afraid of criticism, knowing full well that this brings out truth and example.

Man is in full power of this earth, but he does not think much for himself. This is to be regretted, because life would be made easier and more recreative by it. Such an important matter as the belief in religion demands his full attention, and he is the only one who can solve it. He should read its past history and action, and then note carefully its present-day tactics—such as bigotry, fraud, and untruth. We know nothing of a Being outside of this world; therefore, why include that in everyday matters? The only reasonable conclusion arises, that if such a Being wanted us to comprehend him he would have so moulded our natures that to doubt his existence would be an impossibility. So, after this, it must be evident that man is his own master, and therefore will have to decide his belief. In doing so he will show his thanks to his fellow creatures by putting on one side all prejudices and material interests, and select that which is reasonable, which only affirms knowledge and past experience for our guidance, and gives natural methods of procedure for supernatural or superstitious theories.

HENRY R. WRIGHT.

## THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting held at the Society's Office, 377 Strand, W.C., on Thursday, March 3 (the President in the chair). Present: E. Bater, Annie Brown, Charles Watts, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, W. Leat, E. W. Quay, and the Secretary.

Several apologies for non-attendance were received in consequence of the meeting falling upon the polling day for the London County Council.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed. Cash statement was received and adopted. The President reported his attendance at a recent meeting of the Moral Instruction League.

The sub-committee's minutes were read and adopted.

Forms of application from seventy-seven new members were brought before the meeting, and formally accepted.

Correspondence from several Branches was read, expressing regret at their inability to hire suitable halls for the Sunday evening meetings. In the circumstances, it was resolved: "That the matter should be left in the hands of the President, who would report at next meeting."

The secretary referred briefly to her work for the Treasurer's Scheme, and asked for the addresses of sympathizers to whom appeals might be sent.

The meeting then adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

N.B.—Branch secretaries are requested to note that the member's certificate issued by the Society is now out of print. A new design is being prepared by an artist and member of the Society, which will shortly be submitted to the Executive. A large number of the old certificates, already filled in, are awaiting addresses at the office.

Desire nothing for yourself which you do not desire for others.—*Spinoza*.

## BOOK CHAT.

*Chats with Pioneers of Modern Thought* is the title of an interesting volume just published by Watts & Co. (1s.). Mr. F. J. Gould is the author, and the contents are reprinted from the *Literary Guide*. These chats took place between the writer and the "pioneers" in their studies. Mr. Gould tells of their libraries, the books they love, and their opinions on various subjects. Of course there is a lot more in any man than is includable in an interview; these are only bird's-eye views, as the saying is; yet they are characterized by insight and discrimination, and the result is nearly always bright and picturesque. Among the eighteen ladies and gentlemen on whom Mr. Gould waited in the interest of a reasonable curiosity are Mrs. Lynn Linton, Mathilde Blind (since dead), G. J. Holyoake, G. W. Foote, J. M. Wheeler, Stanton Coit, J. M. Robertson, Moncure D. Conway, and Charles Voysey. To complete the book Mr. Gould should have got someone to interview *him*. He certainly deserves a place in the gallery; besides, the personality of the writer counts for a good deal, even when he tries to suppress it. Mr. Gould occasionally interviews himself—unintentionally. Here and there a self-revelation is made; for instance, when he tells us that he prefers "Rationalist" to "Secularist," and Milton to Shakespeare. All this, however, only adds to the interest of the volume for all who do not read as they run. In every way it deserves a wide circulation, which we earnestly hope it will obtain; partly for the readers' sake, for it will well repay perusal, and may often (we imagine) be taken up with pleasure; and partly for Mr. Gould's sake, as an encouragement to him in wielding his valuable pen in the service of reason and humanity. Jesus Christ is reported to have said that in his Father's house there were many mansions. We may also say that there are many divisions in the army of progress. In his own division Mr. Gould is a brave and loyal soldier. May he live long to fight under the flag of his choice.

\* \* \*

Even the Ultima Thule of the Shetland Isles gives birth to Freethinkers and poets. Laurence James Nicholson, the author of *Songs of Thule* (Gardner, Paisley; and 26 Paternoster-row, London), may stand as a very fair representative of both. One stanza in the first poem, "The Bard of Thule," seems to describe himself:—

His love was deep, his hate was strong,  
And side by side they ran;  
One music making in his song  
The brotherhood of man.

\* \* \*

Mr. Nicholson certainly has the lyric faculty. Witness "It was the Time of Roses," of which we are tempted to quote just the first stanza, as a taste of his quality:—

It was the time of roses  
We met, my love and I;  
And Beauty's hand had crowned the land,  
And music filled the sky.  
Our souls were thrilled with rapture,  
I know not how or why;  
We wandered on by mead and stream,  
And love was life, and life a dream.  
Whate'er the spell,  
I know full well  
It was the time of roses  
We met, my love and I.

His Freethought is evidenced by such pieces as those on "Giordano Bruno," "Michael Servetus," "Blasphemy," "Reconsecrated," "I Do Not Know," etc. From the last we quote the opening verse:—

When early faith, drawn from a mother's lips  
By calm-eyed Reason, suffers an eclipse,  
Uphill thy path and slow;  
When friends importune thee "where thou dost go?"  
Enough for thee if Reason lead the way  
Right onward, teach thy tongue to say,  
I do not know.

\* \* \*

Mr. Nicholson unites hatred of injustice and oppression with keen love of nature's beauties, and of all that is tender and human. His verses have a distinctive note, and his place among contemporary Scottish singers is no mean one.

\* \* \*

In the current *Contemporary Review* Dr. E. J. Dillon translates the sayings of Ahikar the Wise, probably written by a Jew in the third century B.C. The book is certainly superior to Esther, or several other of the books of the canonical Bible. In one case, at least, the book of Tobit, which refers to Ahikar, copies one of the sayings here given.

\* \* \*

Ahikar extols marriage. So the Talmud says: "He who is not married is no man." The Roman censors refused to allow these words to be printed, as they reflected on the monks. A compromise was therefore arranged, and the passage changed into "The Jew who is not married is no Jew."



French Protestants are warranting the Catholic assertion that they are more than half way to complete infidelity. Professor Auguste Sabatier, in his *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion based on Psychology and History*, gives up nearly all the old foundations of the faith; and M. Paul Chapuis, in his treatise, *Du Surnaturel*, says: "Even if miracles ever occurred, which we deny, it could have no religious value." But the Bible without miracle would be a good deal like *Othello* with no Moor of Venice.

\* \* \*

Neville Beeman, in the *New Century Review*, writing from the standpoint of one who thinks a religious creed necessary, deploras many deficiencies in "The Religious Education of the Middle and Upper Classes." The sky-pilots, he shows, are chiefly concerned in the religious education of the masses, off whom their doctrines fall as water from a duck's back, while "they make no effort to cater for the needs of the better-class children." Philip Castle, under the title "Semite and Aryan," attributes the Juden-hassee to close intermarriage, which makes a Russian Jew nearer and dearer to an English Jew than any Englishman. Arthur Ransom reviews Canon Overton's book on *The Anglican Revival*; and "The Trail of the Bookworm" is, as usual, well written.

\* \* \*

*Home Links*, a new quarterly magazine, edited, printed, and published by A. Gottschling, seems devoted to food and health reform, coupled with a reconstruction of society by the formation of links depending, not on wages, but on the free interchange of services. Judging by the recent reports from New Australia, Paraguay, and similar experiments, human nature will require some alteration before society can be completely reconstructed.

\* \* \*

Herbert Spencer is said to be the only living writer whose name has been selected to adorn the walls of the new congressional library at Washington.

\* \* \*

The *Times*, noticing Mr. Frazer's *Pausanias*, says: "Mr. Frazer is better than a mere expert; he is a man who has travelled, studied, and thought; who can select, digest, discern, and expound."

\* \* \*

Mr. Grant Allen's new story, *The Incidental Bishop*, is said to tell of missionary struggles and perplexities amid the heathen of the South Seas.

\* \* \*

In his *More Tramps Abroad* Mark Twain notes that only heathen Zulus are allowed in the Natal police force. The Christian ones cannot be trusted.

\* \* \*

The Rev. C. H. Davis, of Littleton, Drew, Chippenham, is responsible for the story that the late Dean Champneys was such a bad writer that a proof of his work was set up thus: "We must do the Devil's work in the Devil's way." What the author wrote had been: "We must do the Church's work in the Church's way."

\* \* \*

There is never lack of interesting matter in the *English Mechanic*. The March number gives the proceedings of the Australian Society for the Advancement of Science, and an important paper on "The Mystery of Animal Mind." Dr. Aveling continues his zoological lesson; and the letters of a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society are always worth reading.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### BIBLE EXEGESIS (GEN. IV. 1).

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Not everyone knows that the God of the Jews, beyond his questionable paternity of the carpenter Joseph's wife's son, was possibly the progenitor of Cain. And yet competent Hobraists declare that this is the meaning of the first verse of the fourth chapter of Genesis. In our Authorized Version it reads: "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord." In the Revised Version, however, we read: "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." Here all depends on the meaning of the little word *אֵל*. Does it signify "from," "with," "by," or "together with"? Now, in Judges iii. 7 it has the latter meaning. Luther, however, translates it "I have gotten the man, the Lord," the idea probably being that Eve thought her first child the Messiah in person. The Septuagint version reads: "I have gained a man through God." While profane commentators think Eve only meant "By God, I've got a man." Let us hope our eternal salvation does not depend on the correct rendering of Hebrew particles or prepositions.

KAISERIN.

### FRANCES WRIGHT'S LECTURES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Some thirty years ago I read a book of six lectures, delivered by Frances Wright, author of *A Few Days in Athens*. They were entitled:—(1) "On the Nature of Knowledge"; (2) "Of Free Inquiry"; (3) "Important Divisions of Knowledge"; (4) "Religion"; (5) "Morals"; (6) "Opinions." I thought then, and think still, that nothing better has ever been written; and as they have been for years out of print, I have had them reprinted.

The matter has now gone through the press. It will be a volume of about ninety pages, will be ready about the middle of this month, and sold at the low price of one shilling, and may be had from Mr. Bonner, Took's-court, Cursitor-street, London, E.C.; Messrs. Watts, 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.; Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.; and of the Secretary N. S. S., 377 Strand, W.C., at the price stated. I will be out of pocket, but I do it for the benefit of the youths of the present, and for the pleasure of their parents, as it has been to me, to read and re-read those lectures. They were delivered by an educated lady, they are in good English, and may be put in the hands of any one. I mention the circumstance of this edition that a future publisher may not have the low price stereotyped on him.

Branches of the N. S. S., and other societies, when a lecturer is not to hand, would find one of these lectures an excellent substitute to be read to the audience.

GEORGE ANDERSON.

### CHILDREN'S TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL PARTY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The Committee elected by the N. S. S. Executive desire to appeal through your columns for funds to enable them to give the children of our members and friends their yearly festival, and to treat them in the same generous fashion as heretofore. It should be borne in mind that, although children's parties are now a regular institution at most of the better-class clubs in London, the credit of originating them belongs to the Freethought party, which gave the first one at the Hall of Science in January, 1876. Since that time every year has brought its party, and many hundreds of our London friends remember the fun and jollity they enjoyed as children at this annual gathering.

For the quality of its entertainment, and the liberality of its catering, the N. S. S. party has kept ahead of all others. My Committee are anxious not to allow this year to fall behind previous records, and we now appeal to our friends to contribute as liberally as possible. We desire to invite at least three hundred children to tea, followed by dramatic, musical, and other entertainments suitable to children whose ages vary from five to fourteen years. Fruit, sweetmeats, cake, milk, lemonade, etc., are supplied to them during the evening, games of every description are introduced, and each child upon leaving is presented with a toy or memento of the occasion. Parents and friends are permitted to view the party from the galleries of the hall, and a large band of willing helpers take the utmost care of, and interest in, their little visitors. The season is already far advanced, and the Committee only await funds for preliminary expenses to fix the date as early as possible. We shall be pleased to send collecting-cards to those willing to assist us, and all subscriptions sent to our Treasurer, Mr. S. Hartmann, 29 Gubyon-avenue, Herne Hill, or to me, as Secretary, will be acknowledged (with your kind permission) in this journal each week.

EDITH M. VANCE

(On behalf of the Children's Party Committee).

### PROFANE JOKES.

A MINISTER asked an old lady what she thought of the doctrine of total depravity. "Oh," she said, "I think it is a good doctrine, if the people would only live up to it."

Mrs. Wheeler—"Oh, I had such a horrid dream last night." Mr. Wheeler—"What was it?" Mrs. Wheeler—"I thought I was in heaven, and punctured my halo."

Mrs. Homer—"I hear all the members of your church choir resigned yesterday. What was the trouble?" Mrs. Churchly—"Why, after singing the first hymn the minister arose and opened his Bible and chose for his text Acts xx.: 'And after the uproar had ceased,' etc."

"Now, Thomas," said a certain bishop, after taking his servant to task one morning, "who is it that sees all we do, and hears all we say, and knows all we think, and who regards even me in my bishop's robes as but a worm of the dust?" And Thomas replied: "The missus, sir!"

Imp—"What work shall I give to the spirit of that enthusiastic bicyclist?" Satan—"Make him ride his wheel forever on the pavement of his good intentions."



## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

### LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Heaven and Hell: their Situation, Climate, Constitution, and Inhabitants."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, S. Habe (O.E.S.), A lecture; 7.30, O. Watts, "Can God Do Wrong?"

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road, E.): 8, W. J. Ramsey, "Christian Evidences."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion, "What Plato Owed to Greece," opened by J. Oakesmith, M.A.; 7, Stanton Coit, "Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Stanton Coit, "The *Imitation of Christ*."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7.30, Leonard Smith and W. Heaford, debate, "Is Christianity or Secularism the Better Calculated to Promote the Higher Interests of Humanity?"

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 8.30, A lecture.

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): H. P. Ward—11, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist"; 3, "Christianity: The Faith that Failed"; 7, "Shall we Live after we are Dead?"

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, J. J. Taylor, "The Development of the Mind."

DERBY (Co-operative Hall, Exchange-street): March 17 and 18, at 7, Rev. A. J. Waldron and C. Cohen, debate, "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Better Calculated to Promote Human Happiness?"

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class, D. Black; 6.30, A. G. Nostick, "Our British Trees," with lantern illustrations.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, H. Major, B.A., B.Sc., "Education."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, L. Bergmann, B.Sc. "Concerning the Origin of Life."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Evans, "Water: Its Composition and Uses," illustrated by experiments and lantern views.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Byker Social Club, corner of Raby and Parker-streets): 3, Federation meeting; 4.30, Tea and Social.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Vocal and instrumental music, recitations, etc.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business meeting.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—March 13, Chester; 20, Glasgow; 21 to 26, Greenock, Paisley, Dunoon, and Motherwell; 27, Edinburgh. April 2, 3, and 4, Stanley; 10, Gateshead; 17, Manchester; 24 and 25, Birmingham. May 1, Sheffield; 8, Liverpool; 15, Blackburn.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.W.—April 10, Mile End; 17, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 24, a., Victoria Park. May 1, m., Finsbury; 8, m., Mile End; 15, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 22, m., Mile End.

H. PERCY WARD, 6 Wawne Grove, Alexandra-road, Hull.—March 13, Birmingham; 20 and 21, Sheffield; 27, Manchester. April 3, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 10, Stockton-on-Tees; 17, Glasgow.

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The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr. Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

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