

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. STEAD ON PRAYER.

MR. STEAD has published a book of Ghost Stories to convince the world that houses are haunted, and that phantoms flit through the midnight air. He has also published a volume of spirit messages from a deceased lady called Julia, to convince the world that the living and the dead may communicate with each other as easily as telegraphic intercourse can be carried on between England and America. And now he calls our attention to the good old doctrine of the efficacy of prayer. Writing on the late George Müller of Bristol, in the *April Review of Reviews*, Mr. Stead relates a certain story that was told after Müller's death by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Clifton:—

At Mr. Müller's orphanage, some forty years ago, it was discovered that the boiler of the heating apparatus was in a dangerous condition. To repair it the brick-work in which it was embedded had to be pulled to pieces. The fires must be put out for at least three days. A bitterly cold north wind was blowing. Mr. Müller had read in the Bible that when Nehemiah was building the temple he accomplished it, "for the men had a mind to work." So he prayed for two things—that the north wind might be changed into a south wind, and also that the workmen might have a mind to work. The day that the fires were put out the wind changed and blew from the south, and the children did not feel the cold. When the evening of the first day came, the men asked to speak to Mr. Müller, and said they had been talking it over among themselves, and had all agreed to work all that night, so that the children might not be kept without fires! Thus the men had a mind to work.

"Of course," Mr. Stead adds, "the great god Coincidence will be invoked to account for the changing of the wind from north to south, but coincidences that always occur in regular sequence, at least, suggest the existence of some relations other than those of mere chance."

Now the first objection to this story is that it is forty years old. Müller himself and most of the other persons involved in it are dead. And even if most of them were still living it would be difficult to find them at this time of day, and still more difficult to sift this ancient story to the very bottom. This is characteristic of such yarns. They never get fairly abroad in the world until they are grey-headed, when it is next to impossible to ascertain the truth about their birth and early history.

The second objection is this. Supposing the story to be true in substance, it proves nothing. Müller might have prayed for a change in the wind, and the wind may have changed without a miracle. The wind has a way of doing that in England. We have known it to shift a half-a-dozen times in forty-eight hours. If you pray for changes of weather in a variable climate like ours, you are sure to get some answers; and if you want to prove that the answers come from God, all you have to do (as Bacon observed that people always do in matters of superstition) is to count the hits and forget the misses. Scientifically speaking, there is no connection whatever between Müller's prayer and the shifting of the wind. It would have happened just the same if he had not prayed, or if he had prayed the very opposite. Mr. Stead sneers at "the great god Coincidence," and talks of "mere chance," as perhaps a second divinity of sceptics. But chance is only another word for human ignorance, and more coincidences occur by the million

every day of the year. To establish a causal relationship between phenomena something more is necessary than the fact even that they "always occur in regular sequence"; otherwise, as Mill remarked, day would be the cause of night, and night the cause of day. Logical methods have to be employed to ascertain the real condition of dependence. This is what is done in science, but it is never done in religion; in fact, if you only suggest that the logical methods of difference, concomitant variations, and above all of experiment, should be applied to a religious doctrine like prayer, you are met with shrieks of pious protest from believers, as was notoriously the case when the late Professor Tyndall put forward some proposals in this direction.

The third objection is this. The story is worked up too artistically. Things never happen in that full rounded way in actual experience. Nature's dramas—tragedy, comedy, and tragi-comedy—are really more poignant than those enacted upon the stage, but they are ill-knit and diffuse, with dreadfully dull lapses and monstrous intervals between the acts. Whenever you read a pretty story, neatly turned, and satisfactory to your dramatic imagination, you may be sure that art (and sometimes artfulness) has been at work upon the raw material of facts, either actual or selected—that is to say, imaginary. And this may easily be detected in the Müller story.

The fourth objection is this. The dramatist who worked up this story forgot the claims of logic. He overreached himself. He was, so to speak, a street-pavement artist. He had no subtlety or reflection. If you stop a moment to look closely at his picture you notice its crudity. There is a sad want of harmony between the change of wind and the zeal of the workmen. Had the north wind continued to blow, and had the children sat shivering, one could understand the workmen offering to labor all night; but as the wind had shifted to the south, and the children "did not feel the cold," one doesn't see why the workmen should be so anxious to justify Müller's interpretation of the prophet Nehemiah.

We should like to see Mr. Stead's reply to these four objections. Not that we could not urge more, but these are cardinal, and hold the field until they are disposed of. We venture, also, to call Mr. Stead's attention to the fact that the history of religious enthusiasm is full of such stories as this forty-years-old one about Müller's Orphanage, and that there is little need of new yarns until the ancient stock is substantiated.

When a liar is stopped he tells a fresh lie. That will serve the turn until he is stopped again. This is also the policy of superstitionists. When one yarn is refuted they drop it and go straight on with another. Sometimes they don't even drop it, but carry it on cheerfully. They feel that credulity is strong, and hope that refutations will be forgotten.

How far Mr. Stead himself believes in the efficacy of prayer it is not for us to determine. We invite him to make a frank statement of his belief. He presumes to advise the public on every conceivable subject, and his readers have a right to know what he believes and why he believes it. We are aware Mr. Stead is opposed to gambling, but he knows that his countrymen are fond of backing their opinion. If men really believe a thing they will stake something upon it. But who is now prepared to stake anything on prayer? Is there one single church that shows so much belief in prayer as to dispense with a lightning conductor?

G. W. FOOTE.

BIBLE NAMES.

"WHAT'S in a name?" asks doting Juliet. "A good deal" might have been answered, as the poor fellow who was christened Nicodemus Nahum probably found out. Among the roots of religion, as Mr. Clodd has pointed out, is the belief in the power of names. Readers of their precious Bible know how carefully the name of the Lord is mentioned, and the injunction not to take it in vain is put in the Ten Commandments. Leviticus tells us how the son of the Israelitish woman was stoned to death for attempting to pronounce the name of Jahweh. The charge brought against Jesus by the Jews was that he had stolen the sacred name; and, indeed, it is reported in Rev. xix. 12 that he had "a name written that no one knew but he himself." The veracious Gospels assure us that Jesus "cast out spirits with his word," and that he promised that in his name the disciples should do ditto. Paul says: "God hath given him a name which is above every other name." To this day some good Christians speak of "Gawd" in a bondsman's key with bated breath and whispering humbleness, as though *le bon Dieu* was some dread Demogorgon.

Bible names are instructive. What weight the name of Peter has had in building up the Catholic Church! One might suggest that to build a church on a pun is rather a "rocky" foundation. Then a number of names are significant of events in the bearer's lives. Thus Jacob means *supplanter*, Abraham *father of many*, Joseph *increase*, and Achan *the troubler*. Shall we credit that Divine Providence inspired such names in prophecy, or that they were given afterwards, or that the stories were told to illustrate the names? Some names—like that of Achan—are clearly abusive. We know that savages delight to describe themselves as wolves or serpents, but we may be permitted to doubt if they called themselves beaten cowards. Yet the name Hittite signifies "who is broken or fears"; Hivite, "wicked"; Amonite, "a rebel"; and so on. The name by which they called themselves may have been quite different. So with Cozbi (liar) and Theudas (false teacher), under whom we possibly find a revamping of Judas of Galilee, the myths concerning whom may have mingled with those of the apostle Judas of the Gospels. Aceldama, the field of blood, was, according to the tale in Acts, apparently a spot well known to Jerusalem folk; yet we may contend as to whether it got its name from the fate of the Apostle, or the Apostle got his fate from the name, since we know from Matthew that he was hanged, and from Papias that he was crushed against a wagon.

How much the Bible is a literary composition may perhaps be guessed from the infrequency with which its leading names are repeated. Names like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David never turn up twice, though we have an abundance of Abrahams, Isaacs, Jacobs, and Davids now-a-days. Was it reverence which prevented this, or the desire to prevent such confusion as that of the wicked Jews, who have sought to confuse Jesus of Nazareth with the other Jesus, who, according to Josephus, went about crying "Woe, woe to Jerusalem"?

Mr. G. Buchanan Gray, M.A., has published notable *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names*, from which a deal may be learnt. His book is one of sound scholarship, and really an important contribution to our knowledge of Bible evolution from this source. One of the interesting points brought out in Mr. Gray's volume is the large number of animal names of clans. In my *Footsteps of the Past* I have argued that the Jews went through the totemistic stage like other nations, and this Mr. Gray seems to allow. At any rate, his careful arrangement of the fact confirms it. He gives a list of fifty-three animal names, of which thirty-four are names of clans. Among his general conclusions, he states that "in the earliest times Israelite families bore animal names, and in this the Israelites were like their neighbors." "A few individuals bore names of the same class in the time of David, a few also later, especially in the reign of Josiah." This seems to imply that he considers such names as those of Leah (*wild cow*), Rachael (*ewe*), Caleb (*dog*), clan names rather than individual ones, as he thinks the application of these names to individuals points to a previous break-up of any totem organization which may have existed. He admits that such names as Abijah are full of theological difficulty, "whether

we interpret them Father is Jah, or My Father is Jah, or Father of Jah. For to attribute to Ab. in Abijah a spiritual sense, such as the term "father," as applied to God receives in the prophets, and more especially in the New Testament, is forbidden by the parallel Ahijah (brother of Jah) by the existence of the parallel names among other nations, but more especially by the fact that the name in question, together with those related to it in form, falls into disuse just when deeper ideas of the fatherhood of God were developing." He further concludes that the names "prove clearly that at an early period Yahveh, the God (El) of the Hebrews, was called Ab, Ah, and Am," as other names show he was called Melek, and Baal. In short, the names confirm the evolution of Judaism from barbaric faiths in which the father, chief, and king were gods.

In an essay on "Phallic Worship," in *Bible Studies*, I have entered upon the conclusions which may, perhaps, be drawn from finding that in Chronicles such names as Ish-bosheth, or man of shame, appear as Esh-baal, while Mephibosheth appears as Meribbaal; and these conclusions are rather confirmed by Mr. Gray's volume. Mr. Gray does not scruple to say that in certain cases the names "cast doubt on the historicity of the record." Thus of Chronicles iv. 34-41 he says: "Judged by the proper names, this narrative must be considered thoroughly unhistorical in character." He finds that compounds with the divine names, El, and especially Jah, are with distinct signs of late date. Of priestly and levitical genealogies he says: "They have been found to be, when independent of old sources still extant, untrustworthy." That is to say, they betray themselves to be fiction by ascribing to early times names which were only known in the post-exilic period. Mr. Gray's work seems primarily intended for theological students. Those who read it will not long retain the old notion of Bible inspiration, but they will discover that a good deal of light on the development of peoples may be discovered from an investigation of their names.

J. M. WHEELER.

FANATICISM OF RELIGION.

(Concluded from page 243.)

IN our article upon this subject which appeared in last week's *Freethinker* we considered the true meaning of the term religion, and pointed out the fact that fanaticism which was evoked by theological fervor was the worst phase of uncontrolled enthusiasm. We now propose to see from the records of history what the results of indulging in this theological passion have really been.

In the first place, religion has proved a persistent barrier to national progress. From the fifth to the fifteenth century fanaticism was rampant, and the condition of society was that of general stagnation, ignorance, and moral degradation. Science, philosophy, and mental freedom were at their lowest ebb. During this period, known as the "Dark Ages," Christianity was paramount and unrestrained, and fanaticism was supreme. Centuries rolled on amid the neglect of the arts and sciences; and cruelty, bloodshed, and persecution did their desolating work. Religious bigotry crushed the moral force of the nation, and the fullest vent was given to man's lowest passions. Scotland for ages was the hotbed of religious fanaticism, and what were the results? The answer is given by Buckle, who says there was "an entire absence of all true toleration; an aversion even to innocent gaiety; a desire to limit the enjoyment of others, and a spirit of bigotry and persecution; yet in the midst of all this there existed a gloomy and austere creed. The churches were as crowded as they were in the Middle Ages, and were filled with ignorant worshippers, who flocked to listen to opinions of which the Middle Ages alone were worthy." What effect had such teaching upon the Scotch mind? Did it impart to the people any progressive aspirations? If we read the history of Scotland during the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth century, we shall find that "some of the noblest feelings of which our nature is capable, the feelings of love and of gratitude, were set aside, and were replaced by the dictates of a servile and ignominious fear." Similar evils obtain to-day in Spain, Turkey, Russia, and Abyssinia. In those countries religion is enthusiastically professed amid a fanatical spirit that constitutes a permanent obstacle to

the moral and intellectual progress of the people. So recently as last month, at the "Free Church Council" held at Bristol, resolutions were passed to enforce by "Act of Parliament" the closing of public-houses on Sundays. The question, be it observed, is not, Are such places in themselves an evil? Probably some of us may consider that they are. But in the name of liberty we protest against a body of religious fanatics endeavoring to enforce the closing of any public places on the Sunday, while it is thought right to have them open on other days. At this council of religionists there was but one delegate who opposed the fanatical proposal, and he maintained "that total abstinence was not a Christian principle; that, if it was no sin to drink on Friday, it could not be a sin to drink on Sunday; that Sunday closing would be regarded as class legislation; and that the profession of total abstinence led to continual social and religious hypocrisy. He deplored what he believed to be the mistake of returning to the fanaticism which had already done so much injury to the Churches."

It is sad to reflect upon the fact that some of the most valuable reform movements have been deprived of much of their utility by religious fanaticism. The advantages of modern science, which was born four hundred years before the dawn of Christianity, cannot be overestimated. It was the birth of the real savior of the human race. But when the Christian Church arose the growth of science was for years impeded and its power paralyzed through the fanaticism of religion. The infamous treatment experienced by Copernicus, Bruno, Galileo, Roger Bacon, and that noble woman, Hypatia, is a disgrace to the Christian Church. The pernicious consequences of that fanaticism to which these reformers of the world were victims are shown by Dr. White in his *Warfare of Science*, where he writes thus of Roger Bacon: "Sad it is to think of what this great man might have given to the world had the world not refused the gift. He held the key of treasures which would have freed mankind from ages of error and misery. With his discoveries as a basis, with his method as a guide, what might not the world have gained! Nor was the wrong done to that age alone; it was done to this age also. The nineteenth century was robbed at the same time with the thirteenth. But for that interference with science, the nineteenth century would, without doubt, be enjoying discoveries which will not be reached before the twentieth century" (pp. 93 and 94). To this man religious fanaticism was furious, and he was banished to a prison-cell, where for over twelve years he was deprived of everything that makes life worth having. This is how the world's benefactors have been cursed by that fanaticism which, like the Upas tree, poisons the very atmosphere where it is allowed to exert its corrupting influence.

Another sad chapter in the history of religious fanaticism is the record of the Seven Crusades. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century the fairest portion of the known world was devastated, humanity was degraded, and in the name of religion the most revolting crimes were perpetrated. A great opportunity was then afforded to impart European ideas to minds darkened by superstition, to interchange national ideas, and to extend commercial enterprise. But all these advantages were lost through the blighting influence of religious fanaticism, which stimulated hatred, followed by rapine, plunder, and murder. As Gibbon observes, "the principle of the Crusades was a savage fanaticism"; and, in the words of Mill, "they excited a cruel and savage courage, and lighted the fires of superstition and fanaticism." The capture of Jerusalem by the followers of the "meek and lowly Jesus" in 1099 was the scene of a massacre that can hardly find a parallel in the pages of history. Men were tortured, women were violated, and children impaled. Draper, in his *Intellectual Development of Europe*, writes thus of the Crusaders: "Driven to madness by disappointment and famine, expecting, in their ignorance, that every town they came to must be Jerusalem—in their extremity they laid hands on whatever was in their way. Their track was marked by robbery, bloodshed, and fire. In the first Crusade more than half a million of men died.....In the capture by the Crusaders, the brains of young children were dashed out against the walls; infants were pitched over the battlements; every woman that could be seized was violated; men were roasted at fires; some were ripped up to see if they had swallowed gold; the Jews were driven into their synagogue, and there burnt. A massacre of nearly 70,000

persons took place" (vol. ii., pp. 21 and 22). Is it true that we "shall know them by their fruits"? If so, these bearers of the cross must have been corrupt indeed, for we are told that "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit" (Matt. vii. 18).

Fanaticism, stimulated by the emotion of religion, has frequently overpowered the good traits in men's characters. For instance, the principal actors in those religious institutions—the Inquisition and the Star Chamber—were not all bad. Many of them have been described as being gentle and humane, when not suffering from the fever of religious excitement. Tertullian, Calvin, Knox, and Luther had most amiable qualities of character, and in ordinary life no doubt they were genial and kind; but when under the spell of theology their conduct was simply brutal. When in that condition they seemed to revel in persecuting those who differed from them. And at the present time, but for the secular influences of modern life, unbelievers would receive but little justice or mercy from orthodox fanatics.

We have no doubt as to the ultimate result of the struggle between reason and fanaticism. The human intellect is becoming more and more emancipated from the fetters of theology, and the love of mental freedom is more than ever a practical factor in daily life. It is manifest to the impartial mind that reason is like the gentle ripple of a summer stream, while fanaticism resembles the tempestuous roar of the ocean's storm. Reason is the emblem of intellectual liberty, while fanaticism is the outcome of mental serfdom and priestly usurpation.

CHARLES WATTS.

COURAGE THE CHIEF VIRTUE.

NOWHERE is the divergence between the Old Gospel and the New more decided than at this point. The attitude of the Synoptics and of "John" is equally unmistakable and deplorable. The "kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" are in the complete possession of Satan; the sole expectation of the believer is that "in this world ye shall have tribulation only." The world "hateth" the Christian, and the "Prince of this world" is his bitterest enemy; hence both improvement and opposition are out of the question, in the very nature of things, and a policy of absolute non-resistance and patient endurance is his only resource. "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight," "Resist not evil," "Blessed are the meek," "Submit yourselves unto the powers that be," are but a few of the scores of forms under which the doctrine is reiterated again and again through all the Gospels.

It has been accepted as a formal article of belief by the Church in almost every age, but, fortunately for the race, has never been lived up to by any of her Western branches; indeed, only a few very small and eccentric sects, like the Quakers and the Mennonites, have even attempted to reduce it to practice. And yet its influence has been most disastrous, for it has in every age had the double effect of casting a paralysing blight over the aggressive activities of the noblest and purest minds, and serving as an excuse for indolent and cowardly submission to injustice, or toleration of abuses, by the baser sort of natures. In its scheme of the virtues there is absolutely no place for courage, except in the passive forms of endurance, patience under persecutions, continuing "steadfast unto the end." Christ repeatedly compares himself to a shepherd, and his followers to his sheep, his lambs, his flock. And, as Paul Carus aptly remarks in his *Homilies of Science*: "This comparison was sufficient to give a crown of glory to the sheep. Christians forget that similes remain similes; that they do not cover the truth in all respects, but at one or two points only. And thus it happened that the weakness of the sheep, its simplicity—nay, its very stupidity—became an ideal of moral goodness and Christian virtue. Humanity, Christian and non-Christian, is under the influence of the sheep allegory still.....Let us beware of the ethics of ovine morality." Paul's celebrated list of the "fruits of the spirit" contains nothing approaching courage except "long-suffering." Consequently Christianity was an almost complete failure as a factor in the world's progress, until it was grafted upon

racers whose irresistible vigor and sturdy combativeness made a fighting religion out of it, in spite of its doctrines. Indeed, for everything in it which makes for liberty, justice, and progress it is vastly more indebted to the Teuton and the Celt than they to it. While the stern old Puritan wanted a fighting text, he was driven perforce to the otherwise despised Old Testament, with its pathetically irrelevant "smitings of Amalek," and hewings of Agag in pieces. And this omission accounts for a large share of the alleged negativeness and passivity, or, as it has sometimes been expressed, the "feminineness" of Christianity; its fatal substitution first of being, then of believing, for *doing*. The sin which drove the hermit into the desert and the monk into the shades of the cloister was cowardice and the selfishness born of it. And this again left nothing in the body of all its teaching to prevent an abject and cowardly submission to the fiat of an irresponsible and often irrational tyrant, for fear of unpleasant consequences in this life and the next being made the chief motive of human action, as in much of our modern evangelicism even to-day.

Of the passive sort of courage there was a splendid abundance among its adherents, as the superb record of its "noble army of martyrs" witnesses in letters of fire and blood upon every page of its history. But of the active sort, in the way of aggressive, reformatory action of any description, there was a deplorable lack until it had been assimilated and supplemented by the sturdy Teuton and Slav soul, in Luther, Wyclif, Huss, and their spiritual ancestors and descendants. And, while no one would be further from wishing in any way to detract from the richly-deserved glory of the martyr's crown, yet, in strict justice, it must be reluctantly admitted that sadly too much of the endurance and fortitude displayed was from fear of worse consequences and more lasting punishment in the future life, should recantation be made, than from pure love of the truth or unwillingness to be false to one's own convictions. We repeatedly meet with the statement by the martyr himself, as a final argument of the highest and most unanswerable nature, that he *dared* not refuse to do or say such and such a thing, however perilous, or deny such and such a vital tenet, lest he endanger the salvation of his own soul thereby. And, with a pathetic perversion of the mystic words of the Master, "it is better to enter into life maimed than having both hands to be cast into hell," sufferers have actually sustained themselves and each other in the torments of the stake with the reminder of how much preferable these brief agonies are to ages of eternal torture. From Paul to George Fox, one of the chief burdens of the meditations of the saints has ever been, "*Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!*" All honor to their dauntless bravery, upon whatever it was based, whether from or in spite of their creed; but more deaths upon the field of battle, fighting against oppression, and fewer at the stake, would have been more to the advantage of humanity at large. It was magnificent, but it wasn't progress, and there is little reason to lament the decay of the martyr spirit. Nor can it be said that their protest took this form from sheer lack of strength or numbers to make any other hopeful; for, at a very early date, the heads of the Primitive Church were able to say in a petition to the Emperor Julian, asking for liberty of belief and practice, that, if it were not for their being forbidden to take up the sword, they could seriously endanger his throne, so large a proportion of his subjects did they form.

In fact, if we look into the matter more closely, we shall find that not only was active courage, of any sort, not adequately recognised by the four Gospels, but that they positively discouraged such frames of mind in the tremendous stress which they laid upon faith and submission. So that, gradually, any sort of self-assertion or initiative came to be regarded as actually sinful. And it needs only to be mentioned what a calamity to human welfare this accursed, intentional cowardice of the good has been, and is. It has robbed humanity of the better half of the influence of its best and noblest elements, and has done more to give reality to the conception of the poet, "Right forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne," than all other influences put together. It alone is chiefly responsible for the fact that in every age a mere handful of bold, unscrupulous rascals have succeeded in terrorizing, and even oppressing and abusing, half a nation of well-meaning but timid and irresolute good people. Nor can

we flatter ourselves that we have escaped its influence yet, for it is to-day, to mention one field alone, the curse of modern politics. In which we have the astounding and humiliating spectacle of entire municipalities, states—nay, even the nation of honorable, intelligent citizens—not merely ruled, but robbed and insulted, by a mere corporal's guard of the most contemptible curs and cads imaginable, known as "bosses," whose sole source of power is their unparalleled "nerve" and activity, *plus* the unspeakable cowardice and indolence of the "better classes."

—*The Open Court.*

WOODS HUTCHINSON.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE CROSS ON ITS WAY TO EMPIRE.

WROTE the Oriental traveller and scholar, Ker Porter, who found the figure of the Cross among cuneiform inscriptions cut in stone at Susa, the ancient capital of Persia: "The Cross is generally understood to be symbolical of the divinity, or of eternal life, and certainly a cross was to be seen in the Temple of Serapis as the Egyptian emblem of the future life, as may be learnt in Sozomen and Rufinus." Porter also states that "the Egyptian priests urged its being found on the walls of their Temple of Serapis as an argument with the victorious army of Theodosius to save it from destruction." This quotation is made from Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*—most excellent Christian authority—article Cross, where it is cited with approbation.

The reader will keep constantly in mind that Serapis was a stone statue of Bacchus, otherwise known as JES, which was imported into Egypt some 280 years before our era, the object being to harmonize the religions of Greece and her outside provinces; that, to accomplish this purpose, magnificent temples were erected and dedicated to his worship; that he was represented as the resurrected god Osiris, who was slain by his wicked brother Typhon. The temple at Alexandria, the home of this imported god, was made the store-house of the great Alexandrian Library, to which thousands flocked from all over the civilized world for knowledge, and in its capacious halls was a college with an average attendance of 10,000 students.

Now let us see how this Serapian cult gained its first grand conquest over the Roman Empire; for, aided by the conqueror's sword and priestly guile, it became the religion of Western civilization, and is still striving to extend its power; for, says *The Imperial Dictionary* (article Serapis), "his worship extended into Asia Minor and Greece, and was introduced into Rome."

Originally from Sinope, a port on the Black Sea, in the province of Pontus, in Asia Minor, bearing the name of Jes, one of the forty names of Bacchus, he returns to his own country from Egypt under the name of Serapis, while his symbol and monogram, the Greek letter rho, in the form of our capital letter P, with the power of our R, and with the Greek letter chi in the form of our letter X, having the power of *ch* across its stem, became under Constantine the Christian symbol, though, says Smith in his *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* (article Money; in 1883 American edition), "the monogram [giving the character as just described] may be seen on the coins of Alexander Bala, King of Syria, B.C. 146, and on those of the Bactrian kings, Hipostratus the Great, B.C. 140-135, and of Hermaeus, B.C. 138-120..... It eventually became the Christian monogram." How it was done we shall now relate. By the death of his father, Constantine, at York, in England, A.D. 306, Constantine became entitled to the Roman throne. He had accompanied his father, the then Emperor, on his expedition to Egypt, where, of course, he became acquainted with Serapis, his history, emblems, and the motive for his removal to that literary, religious, and commercial centre. Constantine had served under Galerius in the Persian war, and because of superior military ability was a great favorite in the Roman army. But Maxentius, at the head of a revolt in Rome, seized the emblems of sovereignty, aided by his father, Maximian. There were really six who assumed a right to the throne—Galerius, Licinius, and Maximian, all in the East; while Constantine, Maximian, and Maxentius were in the West.

After numerous intrigues, murders, and battles, not

necessary to detail to get an understanding of the subject we are discussing, Maxentius alone, with a large Italian force at Rome, resisted Constantine's authority. On October 26, A.D. 312, near Rome, was fought the decisive battle that made Constantine sole monarch of the civilized world. Maxentius, Constantine's brother-in-law, the son of Maximian, whom Constantine had put to death three years before, was defeated in battle and put to rout. In retreating over the Tiber the Milvian bridge fell, precipitating soldiers, leaders, and the contesting emperor into the swollen river, where all perished.

It was while preparing for this march against his rival that this "fable," as Smith in his *Biographical Dictionary* calls it, was invented. Eusebius, in his *Life of Constantine*, says he saw in a dream the banner in the sky, with the characters thereon we have imperfectly described for want of a proper cut. But Smith, in his *Christian Antiquities*, article Labarum, says: "The thing, and probably the name, were already familiar in the Roman army." On page 909 Smith continues: "When Constantine adopted it [this labarium or ensign], consecrated by the symbol of his newly-adopted faith, as the saving sign of the Roman Empire, he took the surest method of uniting both divisions of his troops, Pagans and Christians, in a common worship."

The word "Christian" here used is misleading; for the monogram of Serapis was the only inscription on that flag that differed from the ordinary cavalry standard. So says Smith in the article from which we have quoted. The worshippers of Serapis, scattered all over Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome, with hundreds, perhaps thousands of temples, rallied under that standard, with the symbol of their god Serapis, Bacchus, Jes—shall we say Jesus? for it was then used on a Roman banner, where the "us" was needed to Latinize the name. That banner enthused the worshippers of Mithras, of Isis, of Serapis, of all the Oriental gods, by whatever name, "found all over the world, from Bactria to Gaul, in Northumberland, on the Rhine, in Numidia, wherever the Roman eagles flew," as Rev. Dr. Bigg said in his Bampton Lectures; and Constantine, if his biographer attempted to tell the truth—a thing we greatly doubt—was just demagogue enough to resort to such questionable instrumentalities to enthuse his soldiers.

Firmly on the throne of the Caesars, Smith, in his *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology and Biography*, vol. i., p. 834, says, "He [Constantine] also accepted the title of Pontifex Maximus [Supreme Pontiff], which shows at that time he had not the slightest intention of elevating Christianity at the expense of Paganism."

In 323 Constantine had subdued all enemies. Soon after he removed his throne and seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople. His empire embraced all Europe, and extended eastward to the Indus, including Egypt and the provinces in Africa lying on the Mediterranean. It was then an impulse seized him, similar to that which induced Ptolemy Soter to remove JES to Alexandria, to establish a universal religion throughout his almost limitless empire. To show how this was done, and how that which bears the name of Christianity was established, shall be the subject of another article.

—*Progressive Thinker.*

VOLTAIRE AND ZOLA.

AN interesting parallel might be drawn between some items in the careers of the two great French Freethinkers, Voltaire and Zola. It was when Voltaire had made his name, and had apparently finished his literary work, that he threw himself into the defence of the wronged Jean Calas, with all the insight and impetuosity which Zola has brought to bear on *l'affaire Dreyfus*. In 1761, when Voltaire had retired to Ferney, a tragedy of mingled bigotry, intolerance, and cruelty was enacted in Toulouse. The scapegrace son of Calas, a respectable Protestant merchant, had hanged himself in his father's shop while the family were upstairs. The priestly party, who expected to turn the son a Catholic, scented crime. The father was arrested for the murder, and was tortured to make him confess. He was first stretched on the rack until every limb was dislocated. This was the *question ordinaire*. And the *question extraordinaire* followed. This consisted in pouring

water into his mouth from a horn, while his nose was pinched, until his body was swollen to twice his size, and the sufferer endured the anguish of a hundred drownings. As he refused to confess, he was taken to execution. To the priest, who exhorted him at the scaffold, he said: "What, you, too, believe that a father can kill his own son?" He was bound to a wooden cross, and the executioner, with an iron bar, broke each of his limbs in two places before burning the body at the stake. Voltaire spared neither time, trouble, nor money to expose this foul wrong. He himself provided for the widow and son of the victim. He employed the ablest lawyers to vindicate the memory of the murdered man. He issued pamphlet after pamphlet, which he had translated and published in England and Germany. He left no stone unturned to right the wrong, and rested not for over three years, till at length, on March 9, 1765, Calas was pronounced guiltless, and his family compensated.

Alone and single-handed Voltaire procured the reversal of a judicial crime, and this one solitary Freethinker did more to procure the abolition of judicial torture than all the Christians who had lived during all the ages of Christianity. It was while the Calas case was pending, too, that Voltaire composed his noble *Treatise on Toleration*, a work which caused Catherine II. to promise, if not to grant, universal religious toleration throughout the vast Russian Empire.

Voltaire was, of course, assailed by all the stupid calumnies that in our day have been hurled at Zola. "He was paid by the Protestants. Avid for fame, he sought notoriety by attacking authority," and so forth. These contemptible insinuations usually betray the character of those who make them. Men like Voltaire and Zola do their work serene above all such littleness.

Zola may not have the happiness of Voltaire in undoing a great wrong. But he has, at least, worthily upheld the traditions of Freethought, and of the citizenship of the republic of letters. He has let his voice be heard for justice and humanity in opposition to privilege and power. As Voltaire will ever be remembered not only as the author of *Candide* and the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, but also as the defender of Calas; so Zola's reputation will rest not solely on *Les Rougon-Macquart*, but also on his defence of French honor and justice in *l'affaire Dreyfus*.

LUCIANUS.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

It is remarkable that a legendary account of the gospel's origin should have come into existence soon after the production itself, suggesting to us the idea of the slow acceptance which the gospel met with. Doubts entertained respecting its apostolical source had to be removed. Hence arose a traditional genesis, which was repeated by the representatives of the Catholic Church and commonly believed. That the story of the Johannine origin is unhistorical, at least in part, is admitted by traditionalists themselves, for it bears on its face the marks of fiction; and we are not careful to claim for it a credibility which it disowns. Any attempt to bring out of it even a nucleus of real history must be conjectural.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*, "Introduction to the New Testament."

Distasteful though to many, criticism must pronounce a fair estimate. Ingenuity may try to lessen the force of the internal evidence against John's authorship, but reason refuses to be satisfied. The gospel is still a theological more than a biographical composition, and reflects an Alexandrian atmosphere foreign to Galilee. It overpasses the Ebionism of the synoptists, and mars the human portraiture.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*, "Introduction to the New Testament."

That the book should be written with a dogmatic rather than an historic purpose may not be incompatible with its reputed authorship. But that a constant companion of the ministry of Jesus should shift it almost wholly to a new theatre; should never come across a demoniac, and never tell a parable; should remember nothing about the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the "Coming of the Son of Man"; should have forgotten the last Passover of the "little flock," with its institution of the Communion, and have occupied those festival hours with the Crucifixion instead; should have lost the Master's terse maxims and sweet images of life, thrown out in homely dialogue, and have fancied in their place elaborate monologues, darkened with harsh and mystic paradox, is so utterly against nature as to forfeit the rank of an admissible hypothesis.—*Rev. J. Martineau.*

INGERSOLL'S TRIBUTE TO A GREAT MUSICIAN.

THE public funeral of Anton Seidl, one of the greatest conductors of the music of Richard Wagner, was held in the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, March 31. There were no religious services. Information was vouchsafed by the newspapers that Mr. Seidl could not be buried from a Catholic Church, because he had requested that his body should be cremated; but it is not believed that any priest had been asked to officiate. Mr. Seidl was an intimate friend of Colonel Ingersoll and family, by whom a superb victory wreath of ivy and laurels was sent. Colonel Ingersoll telegraphed the following eulogy from Wheeling, W. Va. :—

"In the noon and zenith of his career, in the flush and glory of success, Anton Seidl, the greatest orchestral leader of all time, the perfect interpreter of Wagner, of all his subtlety and sympathy, his heroism and grandeur, his intensity and limitless passion, his wondrous harmonies that tell of all there is in life and touch the language and the hopes of every heart, has passed from the shores of sound to the realms of silence, borne by the mysterious tide that ever ebbs, but never flows.

"All moods were his. Delicate as the perfume of the first violet, wild as the storm, he knew the music of all sounds, from the rustle of the leaves, the whispers of hidden springs, to the noises of the sea. He was the master of music, from the rhythmical strains of irrepresible joy to the sobs of the funeral march. He stood like a king with his sceptre in his hand, and we knew that every tone and harmony was in his brain, every passion in his heart, and yet his sculptured face was as calm and serene as perfect art.

"He mingled his soul with the music and gave his heart to the enchanted air. He appeared to have no limitations, no walls, no chains. He seemed to follow the pathway of desire, and with him the marvellous melodies, the sublime harmonies, were as free as eagles above the clouds, with outstretched wings.

"He was educated, refined, and gave unspeakable joy to many thousands of his fellow men. He added to the grace and glory of life. He spoke a language deeper, more poetic than words, the language of the perfect, the language of love and death.

"But he is voiceless now. A fountain of harmony has closed. Its inspired streams have died away in night, and all its murmuring melodies are strangely still. We will mourn for him, we will honor him, not in words, but in the language that he used.

"Anton Seidl is dead. Play the great funeral march. Envelop him in music. Let its wailing waves cover him. Let its wild and mournful winds sigh and mourn above him. Give his face to its kisses and its tears.

"Play the great funeral march, music as profound as death. That will express our sorrow. That will voice our love, our loss, our hope, and that will tell of the life, the genius, the triumphs, and the death of Anton Seidl."

ACID DROPS.

THE indictment against Spain in Cuba is a terrible one. It seems pretty clear that the Cubans have been butchered, tortured, and starved to death wholesale. At least two hundred thousand have perished, more than half of them being helpless women and children. Nothing like it has happened in recent times except in Armenia. This is perceived by the Committee of the American Senate, whose Report contains the following passage: "The fact that Spain is a Christian State does not give her greater warrant to exterminate her subjects than Mohammedan Turkey possessed to extirpate hers." Quite true, gentlemen! The observation is most excellent. Yet over here in England the pulpits don't ring with denunciations of the Spanish Atrocities. Oh, dear no. The Spaniards are Christians, and that covers a multitude of sins.

Spain has never been anything else than a butcher outside her own peninsula. She butchered in the Netherlands, butchered in Mexico, butchered in Peru, butchered in the West Indies, butchered everywhere. Wherever she went she carried treachery and cruelty. Her presence has always been a curse, and in the interest of humanity we hope she will soon be forced back upon her own soil, where she may stand a chance of becoming a little more civilized. It is all

very well to sneer at the Yankees, as a few (only a few) Englishmen do; but it would be a disgrace to them if they were insensible to the infamies that are being perpetrated almost at their very doors. War is a terrible thing: we hate it, and we hope it will be avoided. But if the Yankees decide that the Spaniard must be cleared out of Cuba, and that they must do it, we feel sure that they will have the sympathy of the overwhelming majority of the people of the Mother Country. And as England won't stand much Spanish nonsense in the way of interference with her commerce, it is just possible that Uncle Sam and John Bull may find themselves a good deal nearer before the trouble is ended. And why not? They ought to have shaken both hands long ago.

As for Spain, what she has got to do is to multiply schools, establish freedom of thought and speech, put down the lordship of the Catholic Church, and give up bull-fights; in short, she has got to float into the stream of civilization.

What is at the bottom of Spain's backwardness? Its religion. It is this which weeded out all its finest minds by the Inquisition, and still persecutes Protestants and Free-thinkers. It is the Church which has kept the people the most pious and the most ignorant in Europe, directing their eyes to heaven instead of on the path of civilization and progress.

Teachers in Church schools are worse paid than they are in Board schools, and this point has been emphasized by the Teachers' Annual Conference. The facts were stated in this way in one of the Conference resolutions: "Seeing that 44 per cent. of the certificated class masters in Church schools receive less than £75 per year (or 28s. per week), and only six per cent. more than £100 per year; seeing, also, that 35 per cent. of certificated class mistresses in Church schools receive less than £50 per year, this Conference, in directing attention to this deplorable state of affairs," etc., etc. Of course it is deplorable, but the teachers are partly to blame for it. Why don't they go in hot and strong for pure and simple secular education? It is the religious element that is responsible for the evils they deplore.

According to statistics disclosed at the Teachers' Conference, the "Voluntary" schools pay a good deal less to their head teachers than do the Board schools. The average head teacher's salary in Wesleyan schools is £172, in British schools £143, in Church schools £121, and in Roman Catholic schools £117. Thus the rich Church of England is nearly at the bottom of the list.

Kensit the Protestant hero, is becoming positively amusing. When his adjourned case came into court one of the witnesses testified that in the scuffle in that West-end church, during which the noble Kensit was a little pushed about, he cried out dolorously, "I die a martyr to the Protestant faith." This beats his "Hallelujah, where's my hat?" Sad to relate, the noble Kensit was fined £3 for interrupting "divine service." This he declared he would not pay, but would go to prison for the terrible period of one week as "a martyr" again. So they took him to the cells, and he had tea and watercresses, and then he was liberated, as the fine would be levied by distraint.

One thing, however, is brought out clear enough by Kensit's antics—namely, that the ritual in High Churches is wonderfully like that of the Catholic Church, and directly in opposition to the laws and regulations of the old Church of England.

According to the *Rock*, there is much talk of "brave John Kensit" in Scotland, where many long "to see and hear the man who has the courage to do the daring things he is doing for the truth of God." Evidently this is a case of genuine enthusiasm, for it runs away with the *Rock's* syntax.

Canon Knox Little has been denouncing Evening Communion as "a deplorable innovation." He did not say it was to be ascribed to laziness, but it was "a sacrilegious use of a very holy thing." If you eat God, the least you can do is to take him fasting, not sacrilegiously mixed with other victuals. The only properly pious method of celebrating Evening Communion is to first resort to a stomach-pump.

The Bishop of Norwich says it should be the supreme object of his clergy to win back the laboring class to the Church of their fathers. No doubt most of them will go back in time to the churchyard of their fathers. This is about all the Bishop can expect. The Church of their fathers did precious little for them until it began to see the danger to its own perquisites from their alienation. Hence his new-found interest and episcopal injunction.

At the Easter vestry of St. Paul's, Burslem, Mr. W. Findler, a parishioner, objected to the Communion wine bill. It amounted to £4, which he thought excessive. He

suggested that the wine should be diluted; indeed, one lady had complained that it was too strong. But the vicar pointed out that communicants were only expected to *taste* the wine; and, as to dilution, that would be illegal. This point was decided ages ago, when the Waterite heresy was suppressed. Those who want further information on this pretty question should consult Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer*.

The Good Templars, who have been conferencing at Plymouth, mention in their annual report the death of Francis William Newman, who had been a member of their order for a quarter of a century. One man of God, the Rev. Temperley Grey, of the Congregational persuasion, admitted that Brother Newman was not orthodox, but maintained that, though "his creed was heretical, in character and conduct he was pre-eminently a Christian." Probably this was meant to be flattering, but in our judgment it is positively indecent. Professor Newman's opinion of Jesus Christ is well known—at any rate, it had been stated with clearness and vigor—and to claim him as a Christian after that is simply a bit of orthodox hypocrisy. Freethinkers are not at all disposed to let Christians appropriate as many as they please of the most distinguished and honorable unbelievers.

General Kitchener has kept alcoholic drinks as far as possible from his soldiers in the Soudan, and Lady Elizabeth Biddulph, one of the Christian Temperance women, who doesn't appear to have heard that Jesus Christ's first miracle was turning water into wine, is in ecstasies of rejoicing. She claims Atbara as "a great temperance as well as a great and brilliant military victory." Her ladyship forgets that the enemy, being Mohammedans, were teetotalers. The temperance party on the foreign side won, and the temperance party on the native side got licked. It is clear, therefore, that her ladyship must revise her argument.

The *Referee* doesn't look with much satisfaction on the Missionary revival which is going on in England. "The discreetest thing," it says, "would be to work at home first and induce our own people to act up to the principles of the religion they profess, before we go about the world thrusting it down the throats of people who have a religion of their own already, one which is frequently a far greater consolation to them than ours appears to be to us."

The *New York World* has published a "symposium"—much prostituted word!—on the future of religion. Nearly all the gentlemen taking part in it are professional Christians, and of course they were not likely to cry "stinking fish." They are very optimistic. Christianity is to do greater wonders in the future than it has done in the past. It is to be hoped, however, that these wonders will not take the familiar form of persecution and bloodshed. For the rest, it is easy to meet prophets with prophecy; and, for our part, we venture to predict that Christianity is to all our real intents and purposes played out, and that the future belongs to Humanity.

Again the clergy are complaining of their poverty in the *Times*. The lowering of the value of tithe-rent charge has hit some of them sorely, and the money-lenders find simple men of God their best prey. The more the vocation descends, however, the better for the people. Honest businesses will be found more attractive than living upon false pretences, and by turning folks' attention to Kingdom Come instead of to the cause and cure of actual evils.

Sunday sports are fast becoming more than a nuisance to the clergy. Boating on the Thames and cycling in the Thames valley draw crowds of people to "Sunday profanation," as the Bishop of Oxford calls it. His Lordship even goes to the length of calling it "sensational dissipation," which he would like to see checked by some "sensational antidote." But the difficulty is to find it, and the Bishop gives up the problem in despair.

The *North Carolina Presbyterian* makes the statements that "there are fifty more Mormon missionaries in the state than there are Presbyterian ministers all told," and that "there is a possibility that there shall at an early day be as many Mormons in North Carolina as Presbyterians." Testimony comes from Utah, also, that the Mormons there continue the Bible practice of polygamy.

The Mormons work quietly by house-to-house visitations and personal exhortations, and have established "about a hundred congregations" in the past year, half of whom, it is noted, "have already built churches or secured places of regular meeting." Having now, "to a large extent, exhausted the material of the interior country districts," the enterprising missionaries, it is further stated, "have begun operations" in the towns and cities, "to which fact is due the discovery which has just been made of the extent of their previous operations."

The "Protestant" ministers generally, it is stated, "are dumbfounded at the extent of the success of the Mormon elders," and the several denominations which they represent "will at once take steps to counteract the growth of Mormonism, wherever it has been planted, by sending an extra force of Christian missionaries and workers into those fields."

Apart from the fun of one sect appealing to Scriptures, and taking steps to counteract another that makes the same appeal, the spectacle of the Protestant ministers, with their Bible accounts of Abram, David, and Solomon, up in arms against the Mormons, who seem to have got first in the field, is an amusing one.

A friend at Monte Carlo writes that the new English curate there greatly distinguished himself by a vigorous attack last Sunday on the prevailing extravagance in dress. Unfortunately, he discarded all notes, and in the middle of an oratorical frenzy exhorted his congregation to "think of the early Christians clothed in sashcloth and ashes—I mean, of course, ashcloth and sashes—that is....." but he caught the vicar's eye, and the rest of the discourse lapsed. I have heard similar stories before, but for this one my informant vouches.—*Critic*.

Rather a good story has been going the rounds in connection with a new paper which is shortly to appear as the accredited organ of the Broad Church party, under the editorship of Dr. Schwartz—a step-brother, by the way, of Maarten Maartens. Preparing a prospectus in the ordinary way, the editor asked various eminent clergymen to send him some expression of opinion about his project. One very distinguished dignitary answered by avowing enthusiasm for "broad views on social policy." Either, however, he wrote very badly, or else the compositors were in a malicious mood. When the hour came for scattering the prospectus broadcast, it was announced to all the world that the reverend gentleman—he is a Canon—wished to encourage "broad views on social purity." Profuse apologies have, of course, been tendered.—*Critic*.

The *Glasgow Weekly Citizen* reports the following incident of Chinese eclecticism, taken down from the lips of the wife of a well-known missionary: "It showed itself in naive fashion in an old Chinese woman in our hospital, who was led by our teaching to look favorably on Christianity, but who, in addition to the unseen God, wished to retain the worship of the sun and moon. Her son became a Christian out-and-out, but his mother could not be made to see the harm in worshipping objects so beautiful; and, though we did our best to enlighten her, it was to so little effect that, while attending Christian worship and being an adherent of the Christian Church, she still continued, so far as we were aware, to raise reverent glances and prayers to the bright lights that rule the day and night."

Another tale told is of a Chinese convert: "When on holiday at a distant village she gathered some women around her to read the Bible, and, while reading, a strange light, quite distinct to herself and the listening circle, fell on the page and broke into seven colors. They hurried off to bring the neighbors to see the strange light, but they were unable to see it—a circumstance that may help to explain some of the discrepancies in the story of Paul's conversion."

The Rev. Edward Masson Baston has been sentenced at Plymouth to twelve months' hard labor. According to the evidence, the prisoner had pursued a long career of fraud and imposture. The Church Army took him in hand three years ago, but had to give him up as incorrigible. No doubt this Army has had plenty of other failures, only we don't hear of them through the newspapers.

Joseph Sims, of Meeting-house-lane, Peckham, was charged with behaving in a disorderly manner, and causing a crowd to assemble at the Triangle, Rye-lane. He said: "God is my witness, and Christ is my judge. I mean to go on preaching the gospel." But, the policeman witnessing a disturbance, Joseph Sims was adjudged to enter into his own recognisances in £5 to be of good behavior for six months.

Benjamin Vincent Child, aged seventeen, son of a Church of England clergyman, committed suicide in the Grand Junction Canal at Willesden. The deceased suffered from religious mania, and would pray for hours at a time. The jury returned the usual verdict of insanity.

Mrs. Tingley, who carries on the *New Century*, and is believed to have inherited the mantle of H. P. Blavatsky, says: "Self-appointed adepts are springing up all over the country, who declare themselves 'directed.' This is the latest example:—A man by the name of Webster, an Englishman, declares himself an Egyptian, and uses the name of 'Iango.' He has, since the Crusaders visited

Point Loma, been at San Diego, and is trying to get a following. Some of the members have received a queer message, in which the names of two prominent workers in the political scheme against the T. S. A. are named for office. This 'I am directed' business is getting to be a screaming farce. Who next? The "Messenger from the Mahatmas" business threatens that of Messiah, prophet, and announcer of the last day.

A peculiar point which affects many ancient churches in the country has arisen in connection with St. Peter's, Sandwich. It having been proposed to charge pew rents, the Registrar of the Diocese of Canterbury informed the churchwardens that "in ancient churches such as theirs pew rents were illegal, and if charged would render the churchwardens subject to criminal proceedings, unless allowed by a local Act of Parliament."

The *Globe* points out that April 23 is not only Shakespeare's birthday and St. George's Day, but also the birthday of King Alfred. It suggests that on Alfred's Day the buns left over from Good Friday might reappear as the burnt cakes of King Alfred.

John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, just published by the Clarendon Press, contains some interesting facts about the celebrated William Harvey. "I have heard him say," Aubrey relates, "that after his book on the Circulation of the Blood came out, that he fell mightily in his practice, and that 'twas believed by the vulgar that he was crack-brained." That is how the general public treated the great discoverer. Nor did he fare much better at the hands of his professional brethren. "All the physicians were against his opinion, and envied him." What a warning against the bigotry of mobs and the bigotry of professions! After all, a profession is a mob. Forty thousand doctors will be just like forty thousand other men.

Aphasia is an affliction familiar to man since the world was young. In both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* Homer speaks of loss of speech from strong mental emotion. Pliny mentions a condition identical with aphasia. It is also alluded to in the scripture. Not until 1863, however, was the trouble located in the brain. This was brought about when cerebral localization was discussed before the French Academy. Prior to this it was customary to account it as a visitation of God, caused by blasphemy. In nearly every community an old person can be found who will tell how some one was stricken speechless while cursing his Maker. Scientists say that the stroke was occasioned by excitement, not necessarily of a blasphemous turn.

What is the matter with the *Star*? Has it hired an orthodox hack to do book reviews? We might imagine so from its notice of Zola's *Paris*. "The work," it says, "is not only cheap in construction, it is demoralizing in aim. M. Zola's objects have been to describe the decadence in social and industrial life; to show the insufficiency of charity, and to preach against religion and the Catholic Church." This is a true enough brief statement of Zola's objects, but to call his aim "demoralizing" is worthy of the *Tablet* or the *Methodist Times*.

"What is your favorite book?" was asked of a certain contributor to the *Freethinker*. "*Hell Opened to Christians*," was his profane reply.

In the *Proceedings* of the Society of Biblical Archaeology the Rev. C. J. Ball, M.A., points out that the cuneiform symbol of Nineveh is a compound of *house* and *fish*. He says (p. 10) it is surely a fact of capital importance for a right estimate of character of the Biblical book of Jonah that the name of the city to which the prophet was sent was expressed in writing from the earliest period by a combination of the symbols for *house* and *fish*. For this fact at once suggests that the three-days' sojourn of Jonah in the *House of the Fish*—i.e., in Nineveh—might be symbolized or Haggadically represented as a three-days' abode in the bowels of a "Great Fish"; much as Israel's enforced sojourn in Babylon could be compared with being swallowed up by a dragon (Jer. li. 34), and, considering that the name Jonah (*dove*) is peculiar for a prophet and unique as a personal designation, and that the dove was sacred to the Goddess Ishtar-Astarte, we may see another trace of mythical connection even in the prophet's name.

Not long ago the members of a S. A. "water-rat" church had prayers for rain, and when, the same night, the wind began to howl, and dense clouds to scud across the sky, the congregation was getting ready to snort at unbelievers. But not a drop of rain fell, though the wind blew harder and harder, till away went, first the parson's roof, and then the church's. Not another building suffered damage. Omen?—*Sydney Bulletin*.

A Sydney church choir, until lately of "mixed" variety,

has now advertised for boy choristers to supply the places of deposed trebles. I hear that certain impressionable sopranos were given to making eyes at the best-looking tenor, and when they weren't gazing at him they passed sermon-time in discussing him in shrill whispers, while the young man responded to the attention by handing round chocolate caramels. One evening the parson, being off duty during the curate's watch on deck, observed proceedings quietly from behind a massive pillar, and the frivolity of the girls moved him to such wrath that he stepped up to the choir after service and promptly eliminated therefrom all the female voices.—*Bulletin*.

Evangelist Moody says that the Princess of Wales once came to hear him preach and was duly "affected." "But she went to Dean Stanley," Moody says, "and he rubbed it all off." Whereupon Moody "expressed himself" about Dean Stanley. No doubt it was exasperating to miss such a distinguished convert, and the Revivalist's language was probably vigorous. But how many other qualities—such as scholarship, intelligence, and humor—would have gone to fashion the Dean's retort! What a pity it hasn't been preserved! It would stick to Moody like a label.

Rev. Harris Cohen, in *Young Israel*, gives a fresh supply of schoolboy answers in religious examinations. "What did the angel say to Hagar when he met her in the desert?" was a question put to one boy, and his answer was, "Where are you going to, my pretty maid?" When the Genesis story about the "waters above the firmament" was being considered, one boy asked: "Please, sir, what did they want water above the firmament for?" And ere the minister could answer, another boy exclaimed: "I know, sir; for the angels to have a bath." Evidently the money and trouble expended on religious education in school brings a very inadequate return. The average boy is pretty sure to make a muddle of all the supernaturalism that the men of God stuff into him.

According to Dr. Stradling, the natives of India are convinced that a snake loses one joint for every human being bitten. When the number of deaths he has caused equals the number of his joints, the venomous head alone remains. He has now reached the Mecca of his wicked desire, and at this point develops wings and disappears. On the other hand, some in America hold that when the rattlesnake kills a man he gets a new rattle.

The Deity has at last received local habitation and home in the Australian Commonwealth Bill. When Governor Phillip founded the settlement of Botany Bay he rejected overtures made by the Fleet parson to have the name of God associated with the establishment of the province. The chaplain of the day, writing about it, complains that he was officially ignored. The soldiers were drawn out, the flags run up, the proclamation read, and cheers and volleys of musketry followed; "but all the time," wrote the parson to the Secretary of State, "I was left to stand under the shade of a tree, and was made to feel that neither God nor I was wanted at the foundation of the new nation." One hundred and ten years later the parson, it seems, has been invited to come from under that tree.

The Federal delegates solemnly resolved to "recognise the Supreme Being in the Constitution." Which was, doubtless, very kind of them. At the same time, if the pious person really understood the immense gulf between the Omnipotent and a transient delegate named Henry Briggs, he would leave the matter alone. The idea of a Deity being recognised by Henry Briggs has some elements of the grotesque.

The politicians, grave, who nod,
Assembled in convention,
Have voted to the Most High God—
An honourable mention!
The news was spread at night. Alone
I lifted up my eager eyes,
And saw the constellations blaze,
And heard a cheering round the Throne.

These two items, from a Sydney morning paper, read rather funnily:—

"The Wesleyan Conference yesterday passed a resolution urging all Methodist people to observe the Sabbath, and to abstain from unnecessary travelling on that day."

"It has been noticed during the last few weeks that the majority of thefts from dwellings which have been reported to the police have been perpetrated on Sundays. The thieves appear to have taken advantage of the attendance of the occupants of the houses visited at church to commit their depredations."—*Bulletin*.

Hypocrisy has always hated laughter, and always will. Absurdity detests humor, and stupidity despises wit.—*Ingersoll*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 24, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London: 7.30, "The Doom of Christian Spain."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—April 26, Kirkintilloch; 27, Paisley; 28, Motherwell; 29, Law. May 1, Glasgow; 8, Manchester; 15 and 16, Birmingham; 22, Sheffield.—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.

We very much regret to hear that Mrs. Mensbier, a veteran Freethinker well known to many North London friends, is seriously ill in consequence of an accident. We earnestly hope that she will recover. Personal friends of this lady can obtain any further information they may desire by applying to Miss Vance, at the N. S. S. office, 376-7 Strand, W.C.

A. B. MOSS.—See paragraph. We agree with you that Freethought open-air platforms should be adequately supported. It is hard on a lecturer to have to deal with muscular as well as verbal opposition.

F. J. THURLOW.—Very sorry to hear of the accident that prevented you from attending the funeral of Mr. Fagan's son. The mourners who expected you will all regret the cause of your absence. We hope you have by this time recovered from the injury to your knee.

C. HARWOOD.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

ICONOCLAST.—Evidently there is much need of Freethought in S. Wales. Probably the miners would be better organized if they took less religion and drank less beer.

J. ROBERTS.—Announcement made as desired. We presume you still remain with the Liverpool Branch committee.

FRANK WOOLETT has been elected secretary of the Liverpool Branch in succession to J. Roberts. His address is 31 Victoria-road, The Brook, Liverpool.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges: Paisley Branch, 2s. 6d.; Manchester Branch, £1 9s.; East London Branch, 2s. 6d.

MISS VANCE acknowledges: Paisley Branch (General Fund), 2s. 6d.; J. Hockin (Treasurer's Scheme), 1s.

T. ROBERTSON.—Pleased to hear that Mr. H. Percy Ward met with a flattering reception at Glasgow. He appears to be working hard to win his spurs.

W. SIMONS.—We hope you will have a successful summer campaign at Ridley-road, Kingsland, and that your open-air platform will be well supported by the local Freethinkers.

CONSTANT READER.—Thanks, though we had already written a paragraph on the subject.

WEST LONDON FREETHINKER.—You will see from the announcement elsewhere that Mr. Foote will make the Spanish-American affair the subject of his lecture at the Athenæum Hall this evening (April 24). He intends to show how Spain has been ruined by Christianity—not the disputed Christianity of eclectic Protestant sects, but the historic Christianity of the Catholic Church, which, from the point of view of an evolutionist, is the only form entitled to the name.

R. SIMPSON.—Yes, we have turned over the pages of Robert Buchanan's new novel, *The Rev. Annabel Lee*, which will soon be reviewed in our columns. It is a poor production, quite unworthy of the author's powers. He seems to have been struck by the success of Hall Caine's *Christian*, and to have aimed at reaping a little of the harvest of profit in the field of religious sentimentalism. Somehow or other, you can never be sure of a Freethinker who cherishes a fondness for the imaginary Jesus of the four Gospels. He is liable to go wrong at any moment, and rush into the ruck of the superstitionists.

H. S.—You might do well to try *Darwin Made Easy* before proceeding to *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*.

CHILPERIC EDWARDS.—Pleased to hear that you and Mr. Road propose taking a Sunday party over the British Museum on May 22. Will announce it later.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Truth-seeker—Liberator—New York Public Opinion—Lucifer—Freethought Magazine—Birmingham Mercury—Printing Trades Gazette—Blue Grass Blade—Two Worlds—Isle of Man Times—South London Press—Manchester Guardian—Freethought Magazine.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 8d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (April 24), taking for his subject "The Doom of Christian Spain." This lecture should draw a crowded audience. It will be interesting not only to Freethinkers, but also to their less heterodox friends.

After an absence of twelve months, Mr. Foote paid Huddersfield another visit on Sunday. His audiences were highly appreciative and enthusiastic. We are glad to see that the Branch intends to follow up these meetings. Mr. Cohen is soon to lecture in Huddersfield, and we understand that regular Sunday gatherings will take place in one of the rooms of the Friendly and Trade Societies' Hall. The Huddersfield Branch will send delegates to the N. S. S. Conference on Whit-Sunday.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience at the Athenæum Hall, when he lectured upon "Christ is Not Wanted." The applause was frequent and enthusiastic. Mr. Harry Brown made an excellent chairman. There was a brief but unimportant debate. Captain Adams, of Montreal, was present. Several gentlemen privately thanked Mr. Watts for what they were good enough to term his "instructive and eloquent lecture."

The Leicester Secular Society, in our advertising columns, publishes its want of an organizer and lecturer who can give his whole time to the Society's work. He is not required to occupy the platform every Sunday, as the Society has no intention of giving up its old arrangement for a variety of speakers to an audience that would weary of monotony. Still, he should be able to lecture occasionally, and would be all the more preferable, we imagine, for a fair gift of speech. His principal duties would be organizing the Society's work at the Secular Hall, and visiting members in the town and district. For an able, energetic, and conscientious man this would be a very good opening. He would be expected to exert himself, but he would be treated with consideration and generosity. Mr. Sydney Gimson's name alone is a guarantee of that. Applications should be addressed to him at the Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester.

A Sunday Society has been started at Edinburgh, its object being "to provide for the people on Sundays sacred and classical music, lectures on interesting subjects in science, literature, history, and art, and generally to promote the rational observance of the Sunday." It is announced that the Society already comprises 260 members, one of whom is the Marchioness of Tweeddale. No doubt the Edinburgh Sunday Society, like other bodies of the same kind, will carefully avoid every burning topic in its lectures, and do nothing whatever which is not thoroughly decorous. Still, it is a step away from the old Sabbatarianism and in its way will help on the rationalizing of Sunday.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway gives in the *Athenæum* of April 16 some interesting letters from that sturdy Freethinker, Dr. Thomas Cooper, on "Horne Tooke" and "Junius." We hope that Mr. Conway will live to give a life of Cooper to the world. He was a man of wondrous activity and considerable influence in his day.

Mr. H. Percy Ward lectured for the first time in Glasgow last Sunday. Mr. T. Robertson, secretary of the local Branch, informs us that the lectures were well attended and highly appreciated. "We think Mr. Ward a very promising lecturer," he adds, "and those Branches which have not yet heard him would do well to give him an early turn."

The Birmingham *Weekly Mercury* prints an answer, by Mr. Ward, to strictures upon him in the *Argus*, the editor of which, as we noticed recently, refused to insert a reply.

With a view to completing the arrangements for carrying on the open-air work during the summer at Kingsland, a final meeting will be held at the Bradlaugh Club this morning (April 24). Freethinkers willing to assist are earnestly invited to attend. Mr. Percy Ward, we understand,

begins the projected lectures on Sunday next, May 1, at Ridley-road.

Our vegetarian friends will pardon us for recording that Mr. Herbert Spencer is not a supporter of their theory. According to a paragraph in the newspapers, including the *Westminster Gazette*, Mr. Spencer was recently asked if he was still a vegetarian. "I was a vegetarian for a year," he replied, "but at the end of that time I went over all I had written during the year, and consigned it *in toto* to the fire." Tennyson also tried vegetarianism, as he states in his dedication of one of his volumes to Edward Fitzgerald. For a time he felt like a thing enskied, but his power of production was gone, and he was glad to drop down again on his chop and port wine.

Colonel Ingersoll has been talking on the Cuban question, though not from the platform, and of course the American papers are only too glad to give publicity to his utterances. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, he declared that a war with Spain was ridiculous. "Spain," he said, "is virtually dead and gone, wiped out from the map of all nations by her superstitious and bloody tyrannies." "We have been extremely patient," Ingersoll further said, "in shooting Spain into decency and honor. Suppose the *Maine* had been a British, German, French, or Russian battleship? Why, sir, Morro Castle would long since have been reduced to dust in an hour's bombardment, and the flag of their country would be flying over the heads of a lot of dead bull-fighters and Spanish cut-throats." All the same, Colonel Ingersoll wants to see this Cuban question settled, if possible, without fighting. He strongly advocates international arbitration as a substitute for war between nations.

Mr. A. B. Moss delivered two lectures last Sunday in Hyde Park to large audiences. In the evening he lectured at Hammersmith, where, unfortunately, there was a disturbance. Christian ruffians took advantage of the invitation of discussion to create a scene of wild disorder. One of them struck the chairman on the mouth. Mr. Moss says that our open-air platforms ought to be better supported by Freethinkers. We think so too. A few sturdy, resolute friends around the platform would generally keep the would-be disturbers in check.

A bust of Charles Bradlaugh has been placed in the Reading Room of the Hoxton Free Library. The inscription announces that Charles Bradlaugh was a native of that parish, and that the memorial was "erected by subscription." Bradlaugh's motto, "Thorough," is duly included.

SOME MORE EPITAPHS.

(See page 235.)

It has been said that the stones of Christian graveyards are a paradox, for, though they stand upright, yet they often lie on their face. If, however, the ascription of all the virtues to "the poor inhabitant below" excites a smile, it must be a charitable one. If truth were the object of epitaphs, here is one which might frequently be copied:—

He did not do much harm, nor yet much good,
And might have been better, if he could or would.

Sadder is the smile at the attempt of storied urn or marble bust to outlast the touch of time. "The iniquity of oblivion blindly scattered her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity." One of the best comments on fame is the epitaph in letters of gold in the Hotel de Ville, Luneburg: "Passer by, contemplate here the mortal remains of the Pig, which acquired for itself imperishable glory by the discovery of the Salt Springs at Luneburg." Contrast the epitaph on the tomb of Pope Adrian VI., which he composed himself to convey his estimate of the might of pontifical power which so many men have coveted: "Pope Adrian lies here, who experienced nothing more unhappy in life than that he governed." Count Tessin, governor of Gustavus III., of Sweden, ordered the words "Happy at last" to be carved upon his tomb. Gay's epitaph on himself may be read upon his monument in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey:—

Life's a jest, all things show it;
I thought so once, now I know it.

Epitaphs are not always what the dead would desire. Byron's nasty one on Lord Castlereagh is too well known. Better worth recording is Arbuthnot's invective against Colonel Francis Charteris (died 1732): "Who, with an inflexible constancy and inimitable uniformity of life, persisted, in spite of age and infirmity, in the practice of every human vice." An example of as fierce abuse is the epitaph on Coleman, a plotting Papist of the time of Charles II.:—

If heaven be pleased when sinners cease to sin;
If hell be pleased when sinners enter in;
If earth be pleased when riddled of a knave;
Then all are pleased, for Coleman's in his grave.

A more modern one reads:—

Here X. lies dead, but God's forgiving,
And shows compassion to the living.

An affectionate wife, who departed this life for the benefit of her husband, who remained in this "vale of tears," ordered to be placed upon her tombstone the following verse:—

Weep not for me, my dearest dear;
I am not dead, but sleeping here.
Repent, my love, before you die,
For you must come and sleep with I.

In a year or so afterwards the affectionate husband, believing it not good for man to live alone, took unto himself another spouse, and under the first verse placed the following explanatory lines:—

I will not weep, my dearest life,
For I have got another wife.
I cannot come and sleep with thee,
For I must go and sleep with she.

Terser was the second inscription of the widower who put on the grave of his departed: "The light of my life has gone out"; and added, six months later, "But I have struck another match." There is a tone of polite resignation in the following:—

She once was mine;
And now
To Thee, O Lord, I her resign;
And am your obedient, humble servant.

Filial piety combined with an eye to the main chance in the case of a tapster at Upton-on-Severn, who placed on his father's monument the lines:—

Beneath this stone, in hope of Zion,
Doth lie the landlord of the Lion;
Resigned unto the Heavenly Will,
His son keeps on the business still.

A complete story of Darby and Joan is bound up in the couplet:—

She first departed; he for one day tried
To live without her; lik'd it not, and died.

This is said to be at Loughborough. How different from the famous old French one!—

*C'y git ma femme, fort bien,
Pour son repose et pour le mien.
(Here lies my wife, a bed most fine,
For her repose, also for mine.)*

It is said they have in the West of England:—

My wife's dead, so let her lie;
She is at rest, and so am I.

While to Yorkshire are assigned the lines:—

Here lies my wife without bed or blanket,
But dead as a doornail, God be thank it.

I have read that at Midhurst a verse records that

Beneath this stone
Lies my wife Joan,
To hell she's gone, no doubt;
For if she be not,
If heaven's her lot,
I must, God wot, turn out.

At Chereing-le-Clay, Dorsetshire, after recording the death of his beloved wife, Ann Hughes, the afflicted husband breaks forth in this pious strain:—

Who far below this tomb doth rest,
Has join'd the army of the blest;
The Lord has ta'en her to the sky,
The saints rejoice, and so do I.

One of the briefest inscriptions was that of "Thorpe's corpse."

He, too, seems to have been a cautious, busy man who composed the lines :—

Here lie several of the Stows ;
Particulars the last day may disclose.

And modest was the unknown individual who lies in Westbury Churchyard, and ordered his tombstone to be inscribed :—

Here lies W. W.,
Who never more will trouble you, trouble you.

Over the remains of Burbage, the original impersonator of "Hamlet," "Othello," and Richard III., who died in 1619, were placed the words: "Exit Burbage." The epitaph was probably composed by some of the wits of the Mermaid, and is found in Camden's *Remains* (p. 541). Quaint Thomas Fuller, a delightful and learned divine, ordered his tomb to be inscribed, "Fuller's Earth." This reminds us of the one on Archbishop Potter :—

Alack, and well-a-day,
Potter himself is turn'd to clay.

On a lady who died in 1851 was placed an inscription: "She lived a life of virtue, and died of cholera morbus, caused by eating green fruit, in the full hope of a blessed immortality, at the early age of twenty years and seven months. Reader! go thou and do likewise."

Everyone has heard of the one at Pewsey on Lady O'Loony: "Great niece of Burke, commonly called the Sublime. She was bland, passionate, and deeply religious; also, she painted in water colors. She was first cousin to Lady Jones, and of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Then there is the one said to be in Cambridgeshire :—

Here lies the dust of Margaret Pim,
Who was so very pure within
That she chipped the shell of her earthly skin,
And hatched herself a cherubim.

It is said that at Cheltenham the record was inscribed :—

Here lie I and my three daughters,
All from drinking the Cheltenham waters ;
If we had kept to Epsom Salts,
We should not now be in these here vaults.

The inhabitants removed this reflection on their waters.

Another mixture of Scripture and sense is recorded at Eastwell, Kent: "Fear God, keep the Commandments, and don't attempt to climb a tree, for that's what caused the death of me."

It is recorded in the *Spectator* that there was an epitaph in St. Dunstan's :—

Here lies the body of Daniel Saul,
Spitalfield's weaver, and that's all.

I doubt the genuineness of the famous expression of Hibernian contentment and cheerfulness said to be in Ballyporien Churchyard, Tipperary :—

Here I at length repose,
My body quite at ease is,
With the tip of my nose
And the points of my toes
Turned up to the roots of the daisies.

From Shropshire, it is said, comes the following inscription :—

Here lies the body of Mary Dias ;
She was particularly pious,
And lived to the age of three-score and ten,
And gave to worms what she refused to men.

One from a Kentucky cemetery: "Peace to ashes, for he is in ashes long ago if he got his just punishment. Though he might have been tough to burn." Not to be outclassed by the above, Clinch county, Georgia, furnishes this one :—

He's gone toward the hills of Zion—
Abram Ephraim Crowder ;
The Devil came like a roarin' lion,
But he died a-roarin' louder !

The epitaph on Purcell in Westminster Abbey, which states that he is gone "where only his Harmony can be exceeded," is said to have been imitated in an epitaph on a Pyrotechnist who had departed to a place where only his fireworks could be surpassed.

The sentiment of reciprocity which is expressed in the Old Vedic sentiment, "Were I the God, my worshippers should not want for cattle," is seen in Christian form in this quaint and suggestive epitaph :—

Here lie I, Martin Elginbrod ;
Have mercy on my soul, Lord God,
As I wad dae, were I Lord God,
And ye were Martin Elginbrod.

The witty bibulous scholar, Porson, wrote a very sarcastic epitaph on another fellow of his own college :—

Here lies a Doctor of Divinity,
Who was a fellow, too, of Trinity ;
He knew as much about Divinity
As other fellows do of Trinity.

Sir John Lubbock, in one of his lectures, drew attention to a very amusing epitaph on an overworked woman, which, he said, was found in a Norfolk churchyard :—

Here lies a poor woman who always were tired,
For she lived in a world where too much were required.
"Weep not for me, friends," she said, "for I am going
Where there'll neither be working nor reading nor sewing.
Then weep not for me, friends, if death us do sever,
For I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever."

On Peter Aretino, surnamed the Scourge of Princes, who died at Venice in 1556, was written an epitaph by an Italian wit, which has been thus Englished :—

Here Aretin interred doth lie,
Whose satire lash'd both high and low ;
His God alone it spared—and why ?
A God, he said, he did not know.

Possibly the reader may agree with the last one on my list, taken from Bedlington Churchyard, Surrey :—

Poems and epitaphs are but stuff ;
Here lies Robert Barras, and that's enough.
J. M. W.

OUR CLERGY.

MR. HAZLITT presents his compliments to the Right Honorable and Right Reverend the Bishop of Rochester, and with reference to a circular recently left at the writer's house under the title of "Our Bishop's Pastoral"—which is a literary curiosity, if not too logical—respectfully begs to call attention to his own volume called *Ourselves in Relation to a Deity and a Church*, where he thinks that his Lordship will find some material towards the solution of the difficulty in regard to public indifference and to absenteeism from places of worship. The proportion of worshippers in the writer's parish (Barnes) is, at present, less than 10 per cent. In a few years to what will it have shrunk ?

The Rectors of Putney and Barnes are, *de facto*, merely heads of more or less small coteries, rather exclusive in their attitude.

Some time ago the heads of the Church might have done something to arrest this everywhere downward course. But the whole clerical machinery is so wretchedly inefficient, the ministers so illiterate, and the teaching so out of harmony with the increasing and irrevocable gravitation of contemporary thought and feeling, which is secular, that the cause is well-nigh hopeless. For the Church is fast losing the young—the up-coming generation—the elders of the next one.

The Bishop and his noble and reverend colleagues—not even the writer's old acquaintance, Dr. Stubbs—do not set that example of devotion, humility, and sincerity which would be necessary if their Graces and Lordships, representatives of Jesus! desired to improve public morality; and, besides, the entire system is in need of reform from top to bottom. We in Great Britain are poorly officered in our Army, Navy, Law, State, Church. The nation is strong, but its leaders are not. They receive too much, and consume too much.

Suppose that the far too highly paid clergy were to surrender their surplus wealth and grandeur for the use of the poor. Let them not be preachers and beggars only, but practicers and models. Let the Bishop of Rochester live on £300 a year, and give the rest away.

The Bishop of Rochester refers to vice and ignorance. What contribution does his Lordship and the profession in general make towards a mitigation of those evils? The clergy are not judged by educated laymen to be remarkable for knowledge, culture, or morality, considering that in them such qualities are primary and essential.

The Bishop should procure the writer's book, and study it a little. It is only a sketch of what he proposes hereafter to put into a better and fuller form, and to circulate widely.

Mr. Hazlitt had intended to enclose a series of interrogatories for his Lordship's use; but perhaps a reference to the volume and the enclosed annotated copy of the "Pastoral" may suffice for the immediate purpose.

A copy of the present letter has been sent to the two Archbishops and to the Incumbents of Putney and Barnes, of whom neither is likely to help forward his Lordship's cause very much, if at all.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting held at the Society's offices on Thursday, April 7; the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were present: Messrs. C. Watts, E. Bater, V. Roger, F. Shaller, A. B. Moss, P. Sabine, J. Neate, M. Loafer, E. W. Quay, Miss Annie Brown, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed; cash statement received and adopted.

A letter was received from Mr. G. J. Warren, asking to be relieved from further attendance as a member of the Finance and Propaganda Committee, he having been recently elected at the head of the poll on the Board of Guardians for Mile End. The Secretary was instructed to write Mr. Warren, congratulating him upon his success, and expressing the hope that he would be able to attend occasionally.

A letter was received from the Secretary of the Legitimation League, inviting the N. S. S. to send a representative to meet Miss Harman (President of L. L.) upon her arrival in England. After some discussion, it was resolved that "The letter be acknowledged, and Mr. Bedborough be informed that, as the N. S. S. has not heard either directly or indirectly from Lillian Harman, its Executive does not see what it can do in the existing circumstances."

The Sub-Committee's minutes were then read and adopted.

It was resolved, at the request of the Newcastle Branch, to remit certain fees due to the Society.

The President reported that he had made arrangements, as requested at the last meeting, *re* the Conference, which would now be held in Manchester. It was resolved that the President's report be adopted, and the details remitted to the Secretary.

Fresh applications for membership were laid upon the table and accepted.

Other minor matters were discussed, and the meeting adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, Secretary.

N.B.—Branch Secretaries are reminded that replies to the circular already issued *re* the Delegates to the Conference, and notices of motion for the Agenda paper, should reach the office prior to the next Executive meeting (April 28).

Friends who have promised donations to the Treasurer's Scheme are kindly requested to note that the books for the years close on that date.

Obituary.

MR. JAMES CHERRY, aged forty-eight, a brave and ardent Freethought propagandist, died at his home, Barrow-on-Humber, on Good Friday. His heterodoxy was, of course, severely censured by his relatives and the general public; but his morality was beyond the reproach of his worst enemies. His convictions remained unshaken. At the time of contracting the cold, which, developing into inflammation of the lungs, caused his death, he was dressed in full Freethought armor, being engaged in a lively newspaper warfare on the subject of "Foreign Missions." To screen herself and children from the vengeance of Grundy, his widow, who is left comparatively without means, was obliged, much against her and his wish, to have her husband interred under the auspices of the "Sign of the Cross." The favorite motto of Mr. Cherry, which his widow intends to have inscribed on his tombstone, was Paine's immortal phrase: "The world is my country, mankind are my brethren, to do good is my religion."—E. P. S.

AFTER writing as we did last week about Brann's *Iconoclast*, we get the news that he has been shot dead in front of his office at Waco, Texas, by T. Davis, the chairman of an organization known as the Good Government Club. His funeral was conducted by J. D. Shaw, editor of the *Independent Pulpit*, and was attended by 5,000 persons. Brann's attacks on the Baptist University for their treatment of a girl named Antonia Texira, to which we have before referred, seem to have been at the bottom of the tragedy. Though a reckless writer, Brann was probably the most vigorous and original journalist in the Southern States, not forgetting C. C. Moore and J. Armstrong.

ROBERT REITZEL, editor of *Der Arme Teufel* (The Poor Devil), a Freethinking Anarchist organ, of Detroit, died on April 1, after a long illness. Born in Baden, in 1849, he was for a while a Protestant minister; but in America he became speaker to a German Freethinking Congregation in Washington. He was a vigorous writer and a revolutionaire, with a strong dash of the poet in him.

DIED, on April 10, James, the youngest son of Mr. John Fagan (the well-known Freethought lecturer) at the age of thirty. He was buried on Saturday last, the 16th inst., at Finchley. The deceased was a Secularist all his life. He died as he had lived.

BOOK CHAT.

JOHN DICKS, of 313 Strand, a pioneer in the publication of cheap English classics, has added to his efforts for the spread of culture among the masses by the publication of *Sweetness and Light from the World's Bright Spirits*, reprinted from *Reynolds's Newspaper*, and compiled and edited by W. M. Thompson. As in his *Democratic Readings*, Mr. Thompson gives a lively, succinct account of the authors dealt with, with telling extracts as specimens of their work. The names in the present volume comprise: "Homer"; "Virgil"; "Demosthenes and Cicero"; "Chaucer"; "Aristophanes"; "Spenser and *The Fairy Queen*"; "Horace and the Augustan Age"; "Rabelais"; "Dante"; "Goethe"; "Cervantes"; "Walter Savage Landor"; "Juvenal and the Roman Satirists"; "Swift"; "Gibbon"; "John Bunyan and *The Pilgrim's Progress*"; "Thomas Percy and English Ballad Poetry"; "Addison and the English Essayists"; "The Scandinavian Sagas and Eddas"; "Fables and Fairy Tales"; "The Church and its Light Literature"; "Romances of Chivalry"; "Sterne and Prose Fiction"; "Milton"; "The Literature of the East"; "Ibsen and the Modern Spirit"; "Shelley"; "Molière"; "Shakespeare and the Drama"; "Quintilian and Polite Letters"; "Michaelangelo"; "Wagner, the Revolutionist and Reformer of Music." Mr. Thompson seems especially at home in dealing with Rabelais, Gibbon, and Sterne. The work is adorned with portraits, including one of Mr. Thompson on the cover.

The fifty-third volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography* devotes 168 pages to 178 renowned Smiths. Of these Sydney is the best known, and his life is written by Leslie Stephen. The ones of most interest to Freethinkers are James Elimalé—in the British Museum catalogue Elishama—commonly known as Shepherd Smith, the Universalist, whose most startling work, *The Anti-Christ*, is, however, unmentioned by Dr. Garnett. More notable was William Henry Smith, the philosopher-dramatist and author of those candid works, *Thorndale* and *Gravenhurst*. His *Discourse on Ethics of the School of Paley* is an acute piece of reasoning; and his dramas, *Sir William Crichton* and *Athelwold*, have elicited praise from competent critics for their wisdom and finely-expressed sentiments. Some day we may further introduce readers to this now too little known but charming author.

Among others whose lives are dealt with in this volume are Alexander Somerville, the social reformer; Mary Somerville, the scientist; Joanna Southcott, the supposed begetter of "Shiloh"; Southey, the poet; Speke, the explorer; Thomas Spence, the land nationaliser (1750-1814); Edmund Spenser, the poet; the Staffords; and Clarkson Stanfield, the painter. No mention is made of Charles Southwell, though those who knew him think that witty and eloquent martyr for blasphemy well deserved a few lines.

Mr. William Carew Hazlitt, whose letter addressed to the Bishop of Rochester appears in another column, is grandson of the famous essayist, and himself well known as a biographer, numismatist, critic, and expert collector, whose qualities were appreciated by Huth. He has published many works on his favorite pursuits, and has edited his grandfather's works, the letters of Lamb, and the volumes of the Roxburghe Library. His *Early Popular Poetry* and his *Handbook to the Popular Poetry and Dramatic Literature of Great Britain* are standard works; and his *History of the Venetian Republic* is by far the best on the subject. He has written essays himself entitled *Offspring of Thought in Solitude*, and a thoughtful little volume entitled *A Little Book for Men and Women about Life and Death*, in which there are many suggestive reflections of a Freethought character.

Mr. Hazlitt's letter may remind readers that his grandfather, the renowned essayist, was a bold thinker, who knew Holcroft, Bentham, Mill, and Leigh Hunt, and took special interest in the materialism and necessitarianism of Hartley and Helvetius. He followed Horne Tooke in his theory of language, which knocks the bottom out of theological abstractions; and as a free-lance did his share in the work of liberation.

Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt tells, in his interesting *Your Generations of a Literary Family*, a story which illustrates how some books become rare. An old gentleman in Suffolk was discovered making a bonfire of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621. On being challenged for his reason for committing this act of vandalism, he said that he did not think it a fit book for the girls—his four daughters, of whom the most juvenile was about fifty.

Mr. Edward Clodd has placed his new work on the philosophy of primitive folk-lore in the hands of the

youngest publisher, Mr. Gerald Duckworth. In *Tom Tit Tot* the author has especially dealt with the Suffolk version of Grimm's well-known "Rumpelstiltskin," endeavoring to show that the main incident arises from the superstition of the power of a name, of which there are many instances in the Bible, as was once shown in a paper on "Rumpelstiltskin" which appeared in the *Freethinker*.

* * *

Sidney Lee, the editor of *The Dictionary of National Biography*, whose account of Shakespeare therein is being republished by Smith and Elder, writes to the *Times* in answer to the many who have addressed him on the Bacon theory: "I desire as respectfully, but also as emphatically and as publicly as I can, to put on record the fact, as one admitting to my mind of no rational ground for dispute, that there exists every manner of contemporary evidence to prove that Shakespeare, the householder of Stratford-on-Avon wrote with his own hand, and exclusively by the light of his own genius—merely to paraphrase the contemporary inscription on his tomb in Stratford-on-Avon church—those dramatic works which form the supreme achievement in English literature. The defective knowledge and casuistical argumentation, which alone render another conclusion possible, seem to me to find their closest parallel in our own day in the ever popular delusion that Arthur Orton was Sir Roger Tichborne. I once heard how a poor and ignorant champion of the well-known claimant declared that his unfortunate hero had been arbitrarily kept out of the baronetcy because he was a poor butcher's son. Very similar is the attitude of mind of those who assert that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays because Bacon was a great contemporary philosopher and prose writer. The argument for the Baconian authorship, when stripped of its irrelevances, amounts to nothing more than this."

Men v. Ghosts.

Ghosts are purely subjective phenomena. They are of the stuff dreams are made of. They are created by the minds or imaginations of those who believe in them. They flourish among the ignorant, and are rare among the educated. Two or three hundred years ago they were as common as blackberries; to-day they are as scarce as the gentlemen Diogenes went to look for with his lantern. The only people who ever see ghosts are the people who believe in them. The people who do not believe in them never see them. In other words, people do not believe in them because they see them—they see them because they believe in them. The phenomena do not produce the belief; the belief produces the phenomena. The wise man laughs to scorn those foolish phantoms—surviving remnants of the savage past—and does not even accord them serious consideration. Let the ghosts be gone; our concern should be with the stern realities by which we are surrounded. To make life happier, and freer, and nobler for man, woman, and child—that is the supreme duty. Whatever may await us beyond the sable shore, eternal death or eternal life, it is ours to do what we can here and now to smite the wrong and help the right, and make gladder the lives of men. Let the spooks mind the concerns of the spooks, and let men, for men, act the part of men.—*People's Newspaper*.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

Our mode of religion depends upon the place of our birth, or the mode of religion before practised by our parents. Thus, if a man be born at Constantinople, he is a Mohammedan; in Russia, a Greek; at Rome, a Catholic; in England, a Protestant; on the Ganges, he follows the faith of Brahma. To object to him on account of his religion would be as reasonable as to object to him on account of the language that he spoke.

The truest philosophy is that which teaches us how to live. Any fool knows how to die.

Ananias and Sapphira, having saved some part of the price of their field for themselves, concealed it, and Peter punished both the man and his wife with sudden death for doing so. Alas! this is not the miracle that I should expect from those who say that they wish not the death of sinners, but their conversion.—*Voltaire*.

When men have once acquiesced in untrue opinions, and registered them as authenticated records in their minds, it is no less impossible to speak intelligibly to such men than to write intelligibly on a paper already scribbled over.—*Hobbes*.

All gods are idols, whether they are symbolized by material images or conceived only in imagination; and, for any practical effect they have upon the destiny of the race, I conclude that one is about as good as the other.—*J. D. Shaw*.

New occasions teach new duties; time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast the truth;
Lo, before us gleam his camp-fires! we ourselves must pilgrims be,
Launch our *Mayflower*, and steer boldly, through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the future's portal with the past's blood-rusted key.—*Lowell*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DID THE HEBREWS WORSHIP APIS?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Prof. Grätz, in his well-known *History of the Jews* states that the Children of Israel directed their prayers to the bovine god, Apis, whom they called *Abir*. This statement may appear startling, but it is fully borne out by the Septuagint translation of Jeremiah (xli. 15): "Wherefore has Apis fled from thee?" where our version has: "Why are thy strong ones swept away?" The word used in the text, as Professor Grätz points out, is *Abir*, which the Septuagint translators took to mean Apis, although the English translates it "strong ones." In Psalm xxii. 12 the English version translates "Abirs of Bashan" as "Bulls of Bashan," in accordance with Hebrew tradition. The idea that *Abir* means Apis is further strengthened by the fact that in the Egyptian New Empire we have an Egyptian word *abar*, which apparently means some strong animal, such as a horse or a bull. Consequently, Professor Grätz's statement has in it elements of the highest probability.

This throws a lurid light upon a favorite phrase of the prophet Isaiah: "Mighty One of Israel" (i. 24); "Mighty One of Jacob" (xlix. 26); for what the Hebrew really says is: "Abir of Israel" and "Abir of Jacob." We know that the Golden Calf was a favorite object of worship among the Hebrews, and when we find such a striking philological phenomenon as this use of the word *Abir* (which even as late as the time of the Septuagint translation was recognised as referring to Apis), we must admit that Egyptian religion had greater vogue among the Hebrews than orthodoxy is inclined to admit. C. E.

I H S.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Herbert does quite right in quoting Professor Skeat, because that is the true explication of the monogram; but the question at issue is whether IHS is derived from YH Σ or not. Mr. Herbert offers no proof of this thesis whatever. It is no proof to quote Robert Taylor, who gives no evidence for his wild assertions. I totally fail to see the coincidences (?) to which Mr. Herbert calls attention, and it is news to be told that Osiris was called Serapis. If anybody has any real proof that IHS was derived from YH Σ , let him trot it out. G. HIGGINS.

PROFANE JOKES.

IN Sir M. E. Grant-Duff's *Diary* (just published) appears the following: "November 18. At the Duke of Wellington's funeral in St. Paul's. As the riderless horse, with the boots slung across it, was being led down St. James's-street, Mr. Brookfield's little daughter said: 'Mamma, when we die, shall we also be turned into boots?'"

A well-known bishop some time ago lost his third wife. A clergyman who had known the first wife returned from Africa recently, and wanted to see the grave. He called at the cathedral and saw the verger. "Can you tell me where the bishop's wife is buried?" "Well, sir," replied the verger, "I don't know for certain, but he mostly buries 'em at Brompton."

Bishop Jeune, who was Master of Pembroke, was once asked to state the duties of the head of a college. He replied that these were to write a few letters and to see a few young gentlemen in the morning. What, then, are the duties of a dean of a cathedral? "All the duties," was the answer, "of the head of a college except writing a few letters and seeing a few young gentlemen in the morning."

A clergyman, at the beginning of his discourse, said that he had forgotten his notes, and excused himself as follows: "I will have to depend on the Lord for what I say this morning. This evening I will come better prepared."

This is how a minister introduced a visiting parson to his congregation: "Our brother will now address you. His subject is 'Hell,' of which he has made a special study for years. Indeed, I may say that he knows all there is to be known about it, for he seems to have been specially fitted for it."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Doom of Christian Spain."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): Shakespeare's birthday. Tea at 6; speeches at 7.30; Dramatic recitals by Mrs. Byron Ballard and another, dancing, etc. April 28, at 8.30, E. Calvert, "Is the Book of Genesis Worthy of Credit?"
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. Brandon Medland, "Instantaneous Photography."
EDMONTON (N.E. London Settlement): 7, Mr. Ward, "Why I Dare Not be a Christian."
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, Meeting at the Bradlaugh Club.
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, J. M. Robertson, "The Ethics of Praise and Blame"; 3, Peckham Bye (near band-stand), Mr. Clarke.
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, J. B. Macdonald, "Dogma and the Religious Spirit."
WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7, Dr. Alice Vickery, "Is Our Population the Main Cause of Poverty?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 8.15, A. B. Moss.
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss.
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, E. Pack, "Forgotten Christian Sects."
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. Heaford.
PECKHAM RYE: 8.15, W. Heaford, "The Religious Outlook."
WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, Stanley Jones; 8.30, Stanley Jones.
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, Stanley Jones.
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "What Must I Do to be Saved?"
WOOD GREEN: (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "God and Evolution."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): C. Cohen—11, "The Gospel of Evolution"; 7, "Rome, Dissent, or Freethought?" April 25, at 8, "The Benefit of Unbelief."
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, A Vocal and Instrumental Entertainment.
FAIRFORTH SECULAR SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 2.30, Alderman Healey, "Sunday-schools and their Work"; 6.30, E. Evans, "The March of Progress."
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class, impromptu speeches; 6.30, P. McGivern, "Problems of Philosophy."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, The Secretary, "The Ethics of Christianity."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3, Annual meeting of members; 6.30, A lecture.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, Members' monthly meeting; (corner of Raby and Parker-streets, Byker): 7, C. A. Aarstad, "Capital Punishment a Disgrace to Civilization."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant evening, vocal and instrumental music, recitations, etc.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Election of delegates.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—April 24 and 25, Birmingham. May 1, Sheffield; 8, Liverpool; 15, Blackburn.
A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—April 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.—April 24, Chester.

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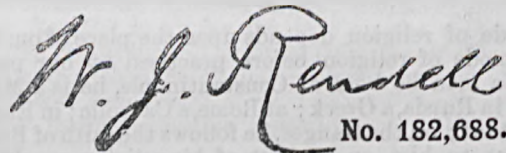
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