

The Free Thinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE POOR "PECULIARS."

ANOTHER member of the Peculiar People has been found guilty of manslaughter for trusting to the Lord instead of calling in a doctor. Henry James Arthur Marsh, a clerk (not in holy orders), had an infant child named Hilda, who was taken ill of pneumonia on May 3, and died some six days later. The parents did all they could for the little sufferer up to the point of summoning medical aid. That they refused to do on religious grounds. They called in an elder of their Church, who anointed her with oil and, in the mother's words, asked "the Lord to remember the poor child and undertake for it." The Lord, however, did not answer this prayer. But the Peculiar People don't mind that. They say with Jesus Christ "Not my will but thine be done." Other Christians assert that God always hears and answers prayer, whether he does so in the particular way desired by the petitioner or not; but these Peculiar People really believe what other Christians only assert. That indeed is their peculiarity. They do what the Bible orders and trust implicitly to God. If he spares their loved ones they are glad; if not, they piously exclaim: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The medical testimony at the Old Bailey trial was not altogether satisfactory. Dr. Percy Rose said that little Hilda Marsh succumbed to double pneumonia, for which there was a recognised treatment. Of course there is, and the same may be said of every other malady; yet people do die somehow, even under the doctor's hands. This gentleman was not prepared to say that medical aid would have saved the child's life, but "it certainly would have prolonged it"—as though there were any sense, use, or kindness in *that*. Dr. James Webster was not so punctilious. He expressed the belief that "had medical aid been called in when the child was taken ill life might have been saved." But one "might" is no stronger than another "might." The child might have been saved; yes, and the child might have died. Doctors cannot foresee the event, and it is ridiculous to be so wise afterwards.

After all, this medical testimony was needless. The law says that parents must call in medical aid for sick children, and all this talk of "might have beens" is, to say the least of it, superfluous.

Mr. Justice Darling had a little theological spar with the principal witness. Mrs. Marsh, the prisoner's wife, when the judge said "And no medical man was called in?" replied, "No; all our trust is in the Lord, and we don't think of that." His lordship asked what they would do in the case of a broken arm, and she answered: "We never have a broken arm." "Well, then, another limb?" he queried, and the reply came pat: "We never have them broken." "I have never," she added, "known a case of a broken arm among the Peculiar People." Her conviction was that those who live faithfully to God don't come to harm—which is not exactly borne out by the fact that one of the Peculiar People was drowned at Blackwall during the launch of the *Albion*, his father being a leading elder of their Church.

Mr. Biron, who prosecuted for the Treasury, told the jury that the Peculiar People founded their prayer-without-medicine theory upon the Epistle of St. James. This is but partially true, as we shall see presently. But even if it were the whole truth, the natural reply is that there is no theory in the case. These people obey the very

letter of the Scripture. What are the words of St. James?

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

Now, in the face of this plain, unmistakable language, which a child can understand and a sophist could not pervert, it is idle for Mr. Biron, or anyone else, to talk about the "theories," the "tenets," or the "beliefs" of the Peculiar People. Those who declare the Bible to be the Word of God are hypocrites to prosecute, denounce, or even sneer at the few who not only profess this belief, but honestly act upon it. *Hypocrites*, we say; yes, and *scoundrels* too—although, perhaps, that word may be thought somewhat too harsh, considering the muddiness of most people's minds, and the capacity they have for the most astonishing inconsistency.

Not only is this clear injunction of St. James a part of the law-established word of God, but it was written by one who was peculiarly qualified to teach the gospel according to Jesus Christ. When Paul, after his conversion, went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, with whom he stayed fifteen days, the only other apostle he took the trouble to see was "James, the Lord's brother," and this very James was (the Christians themselves say) the writer of the epistle bearing his name in the New Testament. He was, therefore, very specially conversant with what Dr. Watson calls "the mind of the Master." He had been with Jesus from boyhood, while the other apostles had only been with him during the three years of his public ministry; and if *he* was mistaken as to what Jesus believed and meant and taught, it is useless to look to any other apostle for accuracy. Whatever is contained in the epistle of James should—if there are any such degrees in the Word of God—be of the highest possible authority.

But even this is not the end of the matter. There is nothing about poultices, hot flannels, medicine, or doctors in the New Testament. Its whole atmosphere is supernatural. Jesus, on one occasion, cured a patient who had suffered much from many physicians—which is a terrible sarcasm on the medical profession; and he cured her, not by rival specifics, but by miraculous agency. Again and again he declared that God would answer every prayer of the believer. "*Whatsoever* ye ask, believing," he said, "that ye shall receive." And in his last address to his disciples before his ascension, according to Mark, he enumerated some of the "signs" which should "follow them that believe," one of them being this: "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." It is not merely James, therefore, but Jesus also, who misdirects the Peculiar People, and brings them into collision with the law of England.

What we maintain, then, is this. It may or it may not be a good secular law that parents must call in medical aid for their sick children. We do not propose to argue that point at present. But while this is a Christian country, while we have an established Christian Church, while the Bible is used as a Holy Scripture in our public schools, while any citizen is liable to twelve months' imprisonment for bringing it into disbelief and contempt, and while judges, juries, and witnesses are sworn upon it to administer justice, deliver true verdicts, and tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; while all this obtains, we say, it is perfectly monstrous to prosecute

simple, honest, sincere Christians, who do precisely what the Bible orders them to do, and practically believe what the Bible tells them, that it is "better to obey God than man." When a man is taxed to support Christianity, and prosecuted for being a Christian, it is high time for someone to raise an indignant protest; and it is shameful that the protest is left to a Freethinker.

We have a word to say in conclusion about the judgment and sentence. Mr. Justice Darling made a sad exhibition of himself. He referred to the "vanity and ignorance" of the Peculiar People—which is all stuff and nonsense. He referred to their "want of skill in argument," but he made no attempt to refute them. He told the prisoner that he was "solely responsible" for his little daughter's death—which is a wild exaggeration of the facts, and even of the interested medical evidence. He said he was not "going to make a martyr" of the man—as though the poor fellow had sought the prosecution. And then he bound him over in the sum of £10 to come up for judgment when called upon. Practically, the man was insulted—and discharged. Thus the law was made a laughing-stock, and thus ended the farce of faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

PROTESTANT FANATICISM.

THE recent riots in Belfast, and the debate in the House of Commons last month upon the Benefices Bill, afforded another instance of the fanatical spirit which dominates the minds of certain Protestants. In reference to Belfast, we may say at once that we fail to see any utility in the periodical processions which take place in Ireland either by the Roman Catholics or the Orangemen. They are simply displays of party feeling—and the most bitter partisans of all are religious ones—which are calculated to provoke bad blood and hostility between citizens. Such processions are regarded as an open defiance to the opposite party, and it is no wonder that they lead to a conflict inimical to the welfare of society. In England, fortunately, such religious demonstrations as take place in Ireland have been largely abandoned, the result of which has been beneficial to the peace of the community; and it is quite time that such a course was adopted in Ireland, where priestcraft, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, overcome reason and common sense. Whatever tends to convert public gatherings into scenes of bloodshed and brutality should be condemned. All classes of the community have a perfect right to meet in public to advocate their respective views, but they have no right to make such occasions an opportunity for violent exhibitions of religious hatred. The world is no longer to be ruled by fanatical processions, but rather by personal thought and enlightened statesmanship.

The cause of the recent outbreak of Protestant fanaticism in Belfast appears to be this. The Irish Nationalists were celebrating the battle of Antrim, which took place in connection with the insurrection of 1798, the object of which was to destroy the supremacy of English government in Ireland, and to secure national independence for the Irish people. The rebellion, however, was not successful. Still, the Nationalists are proud to celebrate the event as one of the many brave efforts the Irish have made to obtain their national freedom. When doing so on June 6 in, we are told, "an orderly and peaceful way," the "pious" Orangemen made a brutal attack upon them, injuring hundreds of their "Christian brethren." We refer to this incident because it is another illustration of the fearful influence that theological fanaticism has upon its devotees. It may be well for the editor of the *Rock* newspaper to study the details of the Protestant outrage which took place in Belfast, before hurling any more of his fierce tirades against Roman Catholics. The following words from the New Testament should have some weight with fanatical Protestants: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite; cast first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

Granted that the Church of Rome is bigoted, intolerant, and fanatical, and that in its hands our liberties would not be safe. We in no way deny this. On the contrary, having regard for historical accuracy, we are compelled to admit that the Roman Catholic Church has been the foe of freedom wherever its hydra head has been raised. It has trampled under foot the liberties of peoples, and crushed with the iron heel of its despotic power all nobility and independence out of human nature, wherever it has held undisputed sway. It has strangled thought, persecuted science, obstructed progress, fettered literature, and blasted all that is lofty in man. All this, unfortunately, we are bound to concede; but are the Orangemen any better in this respect? It may be that they learned their intolerance from the Catholics; but, wherever they got it, and from whatever source it came, it is most certainly there, and a more narrow-minded and intolerant set of fanatics does not exist than these same Orangemen. Their intelligence is nowhere of a very exalted character, and their zeal is as rabid as the proselytising craze of a Jesuit priest. We would almost as soon trust ourselves in the power of the Pope himself as to a party of Orange fanatics. The Romanist fights for his Church, which is a great and very ancient institution; the Orangeman fights for a shadow which he calls Protestantism, but which has neither form nor consistency. He swaggers about private judgment, but he dare not follow it; he says he is an advocate of liberty, but it is only liberty to agree with him. His creed is a mere negation. He is a Protestant, nothing more, and that with him simply means that he does not believe in Rome; but what he does believe in would puzzle the seven sages of Greece to find out.

In spite of the extreme fanaticism of Protestants, of which we have seen so much of late, they openly confess that their Church is "in a very dangerous position," and that it is the hotbed of "notorious practices," to use the words of the Bishop of Liverpool. This dignitary of the Church of England is reported by the *Rock* as saying: "The increasing evils within the Church ought to be regarded with very great alarm. The injury done, and the harm created, by the increase of these things was endless. It was doing harm in connection with the Nonconformists. There were many of them whom it was desired to bring back into the Church of England, and reunion had been spoken of again and again. But the more they heard of what was going on in the Church of England, the less likelihood there appeared to be of any reunion between themselves and the Protestant Nonconformists. Churchmen all over the land were angry. Some wished to leave the Church of England altogether; in many places they went to no church at all. He know districts where men were never found in church; in some places he believed ladies went, but men would not go on any account." This is the usual result of any association that is controlled by fanaticism instead of by reason and common sense. We have long been assured that our supposed National Church depended for its support more upon women and emotional men than upon the masculine intelligence of the age.

The evils to which the Bishop of Liverpool referred were those mentioned by Sir W. Harcourt in the House of Commons during the debate on June 16 upon the Benefices Bill, when he said: "There is at present in the Church of England a conspiracy to overthrow the principles of the English Reformation. That conspiracy is widely spread and deeply rooted. That it exists you have only to read the statements which were made in Convocation the other day. I think one of the Bishops used the expression that he was aware that there were secret societies in the Church of England for the purpose of overthrowing the Protestant principles of the English Reformation." The leader of the Opposition then made a bold attack upon what he termed the "perjury" that is being committed by the clergy, pointing out that these are the men who are seeking to have control of the education of the rising generation. We perfectly agree with Sir William that, "if these men conscientiously do not hold the opinions of the Church of England, let them leave it.... But to remain in secret societies, of which I have heard a good deal, and which I believe to be well founded, and to which Bishops have borne testimony, and in the name of the Church of England to have the control of the education of children in the parishes of England, is a thing which, in my opinion, Parliament ought not to

tolerate." Oh, what receptacles theological institutions are for falsehood, deception, and systematised hypocrisy!

It may be thought by some that we are using strong terms against the Protestant Church; but it should be remembered that the theology which it teaches constitutes a State-supported religion; that it has the authority and protection of the Government of the country; that its churches and cathedrals, its pompous bishops and archbishops, are to a large extent maintained at the public expense; and that this very Church has been a foe to mental freedom and national progress. When we recollect these facts, it is necessary to write plainly in condemnation of a system based upon absurdity and intellectual fraud.

CHARLES WATTS.

BUDDHA AND HIS TEACHINGS.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

DR. JOHNSON, who, with all his bigotry, was a very good example of the cultured Englishman of last century, remarked: "There are two objects of curiosity—the Christian world and the Mohammedan world; all the rest may be considered as barbarous." Since the days of the great lexicographer, however, new worlds of religious thought have been opened up. We have become considerably acquainted with the religions of ancient Egypt, Assyria, Persia, India, and China, all of which countries had attained a high civilisation long ere Europe emerged from barbarism.

Of Buddhism Dr. Johnson could only have heard as of one of the many gross pagan idolatries. Yet Buddhism, as taught by its founder, was the absolute negation of all idolatry; indeed, of all worship, in the sense in which worship is usually understood. It is only within the past fifty years that materials have been accumulated enabling us to rightly judge of a faith which includes within its pale a third of the earth's inhabitants; which anticipated Christianity in many of its doctrines and practices, and in declaring universal brotherhood and inculcating the mild and unobtrusive virtues of purity, humility, loving-kindness, and forgiveness of injuries; and which, in its philosophy, has anticipated many of the latest phases of European thought. It is only, indeed, within the past dozen years or so, and especially since the publication of translations of various portions of the Buddhist canon of sacred literature among the sacred books of the East, that the merely English reader is enabled to comprehend a faith which can only be classed among religions by enlarging ordinary conceptions of what religion really is. For Buddhism is a religion without a supreme personal Creator, and without any other worship than self-discipline and reverence for holy men. Mr. T. W. Rhys Davids, who has done much to popularise a correct knowledge of Buddha's teachings, says in the General Introduction to his Translation of the Buddhist Suttas (p. 142):—

"Never in the history of the world had a scheme of salvation been put forth so simple in its nature, so free from any superhuman agency, so independent of, so even antagonistic to, the belief in a soul, the belief in God, and the hope for a future life. And we must not allow our estimate of the importance of the event to be influenced by our disagreement from the opinions set forth. Whether these be right or wrong, it was a turning point in the religious history of man when a reformer full of the most honest moral purpose, and trained in all the intellectual culture of his time, put forward deliberately, and with a knowledge of the opposing views, the doctrine of a salvation to be found here, in this life, in an inward change of heart, to be brought about by perseverance in a mere system of self-culture and of self-control."

Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was born, probably, about the middle of the sixth century B.C., at Kapilavasthu, in what is now the province of Oude. He was thus nearly the contemporary of Pythagoras, Confucius, and Lao-tse. Various legends are told of him as of other great teachers. According to the common Buddhist view, he was one of a succession of Buddhas who have descended from the Tushita heavens and become incarnate for the redemption of men. Wondrous prodigies are said to have attended his birth and infancy, some of them surprisingly similar to those related of the founder of Christianity. Dismissing these, there is no reason to doubt that Gautama was an

historical character. Dr. Oldenburg, while doubting the story of Gautama's princely truth, completely overthrows the theory of M. Senart that he is merely a Sun-hero.

India, at the time when Gautama lived, was already a civilised country. Its religion, Brahmanism, from which Buddhism is as essentially sprung as Christianity from Judaism, had advanced far beyond the personified nature-worship of the Rig-veda. The Brahmans, while conceding to the people a crowd of tutelary deities, had formulated an inner doctrine of spiritual Pantheism, summed up in the phrase, *ekum eva advitiyam*—"There is but one Being, no second"; and had instituted a system of caste which proved the most powerful social engine ever devised. Among themselves, however, considerable freedom of discussion was allowed. Sixty-three different schools of philosophy are mentioned as existing in the time of Gautama—most of these were concerned with the great religious problem of the Hindus, how to attain *Moksha*—emancipation from the round of transmigrating births. This problem also it was which engaged the attention of Buddhism, although its solution was different from the Brahmanic one of attaining absorption in Brahm, by identification of the Self with the Supreme.

The story of how Gautama, by meditating upon the impermanency of life and the manifold miseries of sentient existence, was led to quit his home in the endeavor to find deliverance for himself and his fellows, is one that has often been told, and which is as familiar to Buddhists as the story of Jesus is among Christians. Mr. Edwin Arnold, in his *Light of Asia*, has, in choice Tennysonian blank verse, treated the subject with a tender, sentimental grace, though scarcely with the majesty of which the theme is susceptible:—

My chariot shall not roll with bloody wheels
From victory to victory, till earth
Wears the red record of my name. I choose
To tread its paths with patient, stainless feet,
Making its dust my bed, its loneliest wastes
My dwelling, and its meanest things my mates;
Clad in no prouder garb than outcasts wear,
Fed with no meat save what the charitable
Give of their will, sheltered by no more pomp
Than the dim cave lends or the jungle bush.
This will I do because the woeful cry
Of life and all flesh living cometh up
Into my ears, and all my soul is full
Of pity for the sickness of this world;
Which I will heal, if healing may be found
By uttermost renouncing and strong strife
For which of all the great and lesser Gods
Have power or pity? Who hath seen them—who?
What have they wrought to help their worshippers?
How hath it steadied men to pray, and pay
Tithes of the corn and oil, to chant the charms,
To slay the shrieking sacrifice, to rear
The stately vane, to feed the priests, and call
On Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, who save
None—not the worthiest—from the griefs that teach
Those litanies of flattery and fear
Ascending day by day, like wasted smoke.

An easily read legend, which, curiously enough, has been transferred to a Christian saint, tells how Gautama was determined to what is called "the great renunciation" by the sight of a blear-eyed, hollow-cheeked old man, tottering on crutches; next of one fever-stricken, his whole body foul with disease; and then of a putrid corpse with dogs and vultures praying on its entrails. Filled with horror and anguish, he lastly saw a serene recluse, dead to all the desires of the world. Happy the lot of a Bhikkhu, he thought, and resolved to retire from the world until, freed from all desire and passion, he could return to reform it. He left his home when aged twenty-nine. He repaired to various noted teachers of philosophy, but none could give him peace. He had a hunger of the heart, no more to be appeased by the phrases of philosophy than by the formulas of priestcraft. He retired to solitude, subjecting himself to the severest discipline of asceticism. For six years he practised the most rigorous austerities, enduring hunger, thirst, heat, rain, and cold, inwardly meditating how to bring about deliverance, and doubtless maturing the system which he eventually preached. Here, at least, he discovered that mortification of the body for the sake of the mind was a mistake, that asceticism was only a discipline, and, if considered of having merit in itself, was a delusion and a snare. Five disciples then deserted him. They had been attracted by his reputation for sanctity, for in the

Hindu superstition self-torture was esteemed so worthy that by it even the wicked could obtain power over the good. He silently wandered away and sat down under a Bodhi, or sacred fig-tree at Uruvelâ, on the bank of the Lilayan, or Phalgu, river in Behar. Here he vowed never to leave until he had received enlightenment; and, it is said, after temptations by Mara, the Evil One—the details of which, says Mr. Davids (*Hibbert Lecture*, p. 127), are curiously similar to those of the temptation in the wilderness—he here had his inner eye opened. He became awakened, enlightened—a Buddha. In a conception of the power of the human mind to rise above fate by self-control, and by love to others, he had found inward peace. Henceforth his life was an unceasing apostolate. He made his way to Benares, then, as now, the seat of piety and pride, sacred to the Hindu as Mecca to the Mussulman or Jerusalem to the Jew, and preached his first discourse, "The *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*," which Mr. Davids translates the Sûtra of the Foundations of the Kingdom of Righteousness. In this he explained that his doctrine was a middle path between the extremes of sensuality and asceticism, which are alike profitless and ignoble. It consisted of the attainment of Right Views; free from superstition or delusion. Right Aspirations; high and worthy of the intelligent earnest man. Right Speech; kindly, open, truthful. Right Conduct; peaceful, honest, pure. Right Livelihood; working without hurt or danger to any living thing. Right Effort; in self-training and self-control. Right Mindfulness; watchful and active. Right Contemplation; earnest thought on the deep mysteries of life. This was the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to insight, wisdom, Buddhahood, and Nirvana. The necessity of following this path arose from what are called the Four Noble Truths. These affirm (1) The fact of suffering. Birth is suffering; illness, decay, and death are suffering; to be united with the unloved, to be separated from the loved, not to obtain what we desire—in short, suffering is involved in the existence of conscious individuality. (2) The cause of suffering, described as *Tanhâ*, the thirst, desire, or lust for externals which act on the senses. This *Tanhâ* is usually stated in its threefold form of lust for pleasure, for existence, and prosperity.* (3) The cessation of suffering, to be attained by destroying this lust. (4) The method, being the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddha. As this also forms the subject of his last words in the *Para-nibbânam Sutta* (or discourse of the Great Decease), there can be little doubt about its forming the essential part of his teaching.

(To be concluded.)

GAMBETTA.

[This article on the great French Atheist, orator, and statesman was written fourteen years ago. It has not appeared before in the *Freethinker*.]

"We shall hear no longer that heroic song which was the poetry of our struggles for nearly fifteen years, rendering triumph more joyous and ennobling defeat." These words were spoken by M. Brisson, the President of the French Chamber of Deputies, over Gambetta's bier at Père La Chaise. They form perhaps the finest tribute to his memory, and worthily celebrate the genius of the great patriot who was carried to his grave by a million of men. M. Brisson struck the keynote of Gambetta's history. He was a sagacious and virile politician, a statesman of the first order, a born leader of men. But he was something more. He was the voice of France, grand as her strength, rich as her greatness, and proud as her glory. From the moment when his eloquence withered the pride of an empire to the moment when he yielded to the universal victor Death, his voice rang out like a clarion over all the tumult and strife of France. Sometimes, indeed, it was like a thunder-peal, stilling all other voices as a lion's roar might drown the barking of dogs. Then he was terrible. Woe to those who crossed his path! The levin-brand accompanied the thunder, the lion's roar heralded the claws and fangs.

Mirabeau, too, was the voice of France in one tremendous crisis. There is much resemblance between these two.

* *Tanhâ*, however, is sometimes led back to *avigga* (ignorance) as its deepest root. Again, *tanhâ* is said to be the mother, and *avigga* the father of all.

Both were of Italian descent, both had strong commanding figures, both had the same stormy mane of black hair, both were supreme orators, both were at home in the whirlwind, both possessed that peculiar mingling of meridional fervor and *finesse*, and both died in the prime of life, too early for their country, but not for the splendor of their renown. The latter man, however, had the happier fortune. Mirabeau left the Revolution without a captain, to drift over shoals and into whirlpools, and to dash on rocks; but Gambetta saw the Republic firmly established, and left it powerful and secure.

Léon Michel Gambetta was born on October 30, 1838, at Cahors, a small Gascon town, which has also the distinction of being the birthplace of Clement Marot. His father, Joseph Gambetta, came from Genoa in the early part of the century. He set up a small grocery business, prospered, and in 1837 married Mdlle. M. Massabie, daughter of a Cahors druggist, by whom he had two children, Léon, and a daughter, Benedette, now Mdme. Leris. Joseph Gambetta still survives, a hale old man; he walked bareheaded two miles after his son's coffin at Nice, despite the rain; and although the loss of his wife and son in one year has told heavily on him, many years may elapse before he sleeps by their side. Like his great son, he possesses a natural eloquence, and some thought him the better talker of the two.

Gambetta was fortunate in his name. It was unique and separated him from the multitude of politicians when he entered the arena. There were any number of respectable Jules—Jules Favre, Jules Grévy, Jules Simon; but he was a Léon, and in the days when he was the idol of the Paris workmen they used to roll out his sonorous name with real pride. Léon Gambetta! There was an amplitude in it that agreed with his face and figure and the style of his eloquence.

Mdlle. Massabie, Gambetta's aunt, devoted herself to him from his infancy. She taught him his letters by means of chocolate tablets, which he was allowed to eat when he could read them. She was perfectly sure he would become a great man, and all her little income was spent on his education. She was his guardian angel until her own death. When he came to Paris to seek his fortune, she accompanied him, and acted as his housekeeper. *Tatan*, as she was familiarly called, brought with her to Paris her plain country ways and Gascon speech. She never praised him to his face, but behind his back she let people know what she thought of "notre Léon." Sometimes she stretched forth a prophetic finger and exclaimed "*mais il arrivera.*" She closely scrutinised all his acquaintances, and described them in strong Gascon. This one, she would say, loves you; that one looks like a Jesuit. Gambetta once said that she could tell from the ring of the bell whether any visitor was a friend or an enemy. Mr. Grenville Murray, in the *Daily News* of July 4, 1874, gave a most amusing account of her maternal vigilance:—

"There is no household in Paris conducted with more genuine simplicity and order. The excellent lady exercising authority therein does nearly everything, sees to everything; lays hold on Gambetta's purse whenever the dividends of the *République Française* swell it; invests the money she economises for him; takes notes of bales of letters—letters from constituents, from patriots, male and female, from foes, from political friends, from spies, from false brethren, from lunatics, which are to be thrown into the fire or answered. Her most arduous task is acting as a buffer between her nephew and visitors innumerable, she making herself as agreeable as one so perpetually cumbered can be to those of whose common sense and sincerity she feels certain, and showing herself dry and curt to importunate lion-hunters. Mdlle. Massabie sticks to her plain provincial ways, dressing on week-days, no matter what high political flyers she has to usher in, in black stuff skirt, loose jacket, and clear starched muslin cap; and on Sundays in plain black silk, guiltless of flounce or frill.....The door is opened by the cousin, a private secretary of Gambetta—a young man of thirty—also brought up by the maiden aunt, already at the Palais de Justice noted for his ability in dealing with crotchety law cases. The visitor passes from the narrow passage into a small, uncarpeted, meagrely-furnished but very neat dining-room, where he finds the lady of the house *on guard*. She ushers him, according to the degree of confidence he inspires or the intimacy he enjoys, into the study."

Tutan remained with him until she was struck with paralysis in 1876. After Gambetta had routed the

reactionaries in the electoral campaign of 1877, he went straight to Nice and soothed her last hours. The attachment was honorable to both. Gambetta had a faculty for inspiring affection. The faithful valet, François, who attended him to the last, was a poor mobile whom he picked up in 1870. Wages or no wages, he would not be parted from his master. All Gambetta's friends loved him deeply, and he deserved their love. Nothing could be more touching than the scenes witnessed at Villa d'Avray directly after his death. Men of high intellect and position wept aloud, eyes were swollen with grief, and many sat still and speechless, stunned by the dreadful blow. It was hard to realise that the great warm heart was for ever cold, and that splendid exuberance for ever quenched.

Gambetta's uncle was a priest, and his father wished him to enter that profession. Accordingly he was sent to a clerical seminary. He was ardently religious, and at the age of ten he wrote an ode dedicated to "his patron, St. Léon, and to all the Popes called Léon." As an illustration of the virulence with which he was attacked by certain sections of the press in the height of his popularity, it may be mentioned that this juvenile production was actually cited to prove him a renegade. But he only laughed heartily at it, unlike Rochefort, who raved with passion when a Bonapartist journal found and reprinted an ode to the Virgin, which he had published at the age of seventeen.

Notwithstanding his precocious piety, Gambetta did not remain long at this seminary. He lacked several religious virtues, and especially humility. He would not take blows without returning them, he was disputatious, he was headstrong. His ecclesiastical masters reported him as *un esprit rebelle, turbulent*, and advised his removal to another school. He was then sent to the lay public school at Cahors, where he soon won golden opinions. He became the best Latin scholar in the establishment, and the most proficient in French composition. But the most remarkable fact is that his superiors gave him an excellent character. They described him as "passionate without being vindictive, and proud without arrogance." No doubt the secret of the different estimate formed by his religious tutors may be found in their own words. They foretold that he would make a great figure in life, "but never," they regretfully added, "as a Churchman."

Even at this early age Gambetta showed a bent for politics. He read the parliamentary debates in some old volumes of the *Constitutionnel*, and was delighted with the speeches of Thiers. On one occasion, in his seventeenth year, he had to deliver an address in Latin to M. Fourtoul, Minister of Public Instruction, who visited the town. The address was revised by the head master, but in declaiming it Gambetta inserted some reflections of his own upon the reign of Tiberius, by whom he meant Napoleon III. M. Fourtoul did not scent the mischief, and when the head scholar had finished his oration the Minister of Public Instruction patted him on the head, saying "*très bien, très bien.*"

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

THE LADIES AND THE MAGISTRATE.

THERE was a blushing magistrate
All in the street of Bow;
Said he: "This case is very blue;
Dear ladies, go! I beg you to—
It really is not fit for you."
And yet they would not go.

The magistrate, he shook his head,
And said, with air recondite:
"The law permits you to be here,
'Tis true; but mark, this book will sear
Your moral fibre; mine, I fear,
Was long since quite beyond it."

And yet the ladies stayed and stayed
Until the case was over;
Their friends now scan them eagerly,
The awful difference to see
'Twixt what they were and what they be.
Yet nought can they discover.

WILLIAM PLATT.

SLAVERY.

EASY is the descent into hell, but most difficult is the ascent to the world of mortals; yet in this end of the nineteenth century, when men who claim to be civilised assert that freedom has reached fruition, a state of miserable bondage obtains from which we would raise them, and we will.

The condition of the Israelites in Egypt, the bodily fatigue they underwent, the physical suffering they endured; the anguish of mind, the agony of soul that were nearly keen enough to turn the brain; these have been expiated on time after time. The refinement of torture endured by negroes, not in Africa only, but in the United States before the civil war, has been written about in words of fire. And now slavery is relegated, so far as mere recognised bodily bondage goes, to the limbo of a dead past, the memory of which is ever present; so that the mere mention even of a condition of serfdom is sufficient to arouse feelings of pity in any civilised community. And rightly so. But much as the powers that be may congratulate themselves and one another on the supposed suppression of the slave traffic, is it not a fact that the minds and hearts of thousands of men and women are in a bondage more dreadful than any Egyptian bondage—slaves to the superstitions of past ages? The religion of their forefathers hangs like a millstone around their necks; the shackles of dogmas made in the age of faith impede their progress; reason is dethroned in the churches. Why is it? Is it that environment has so great an influence that they cannot free themselves from it? Or is it that the religious instruction received in the early days—an impression always the most lasting—gives a bias to the mind, a bent to the inclination which few are able to overcome when the age of reason bids faith stand on one side? Certainly bibliolatry is a great factor in the slavery of mind. In the days of youth, when the soul is plastic, when the foundations of the superstructure of character are laid, when the impress of the future is stamped indelibly on each individual; in those early days, if the Bible is crowned with myrtle, enshrined in the highest niche, regarded as too sacred to question, then no wonder if its words are considered divine, if its superstitions are thought sacred truth, if its myths and mysteries are believed to be sanctified facts, far on through the days of early manhood to middle age. This Bible, which has been proved no revelation, which contradicts itself over and over again, which is full of immoralities, absurdities, and inconsistencies, which is in no sense final—this book is one of the chains which enslave mankind to error. Freethought must, for some time, direct much of its energy to the destruction of this fetish. Bibliolatry permeates the sects. Nonconformists swear by it, the Established Church proclaims "Church doctrine to be Bible truth." Every sermon assumes the truth of the Scriptures. The stock argument of the Christian is a text. To free them from their bondage it is necessary for all Freethinkers to be zealous in propagandist work of a destructive nature. Reconstruction will come of itself. With us is freedom, and therefore truth.

J. S.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

J. Pruett, 5s.; T. M. G., 1s.; B. C. W., 1s.; P. Cassidy, 1s.; T. J. Thurlow (collection), 4s.; Glasgow Branch N. S. S., £1; T. Robertson, 5s.
Per Miss Vance:—W. Fowler, 1s.; R. E., 2s. 6d.
Per R. Forster:—E. Holyoake Marsh, £2; G. C., 2s.; G. Milford, 1s.

A little girl in Boston wrote a composition on boys. Here it is: "The boy is not an animal, yet he can be heard to a considerable distance. When a boy hollers he opens his big mouth like frogs but girls hold their tongue till they are spoke to, and then they answer respectable and tell just how it was. A boy thinks himself clever because he can wade where it is deep, but God made the dry land for every living thing, and rested on the seventh day. When the boy grows up he is called a husband, and then he stops wading and stays out nights, but the grown-up girl is a widow and keeps house."

THE BEDBOROUGH CASE.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Free Press Defence Committee was held on Friday evening, June 24, at the Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, London. Mr. G. W. Foote, who occupied the chair, moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. William Platt, and carried unanimously:—

"That, while not concerned to oppose, defend, or express any opinion respecting the particular views of Mr. Bedborough or of the various other persons for circulating whose writings he is being prosecuted, this meeting regards the present case as one which requires the most careful watching in the interest of the general freedom of the press; and this meeting pledges itself to endeavor to raise the necessary means for Mr. Bedborough's defence, regarding this as the most practical assertion of the principle which is assailed by the prosecution."

It was then resolved that a manifesto, on the basis of this resolution, should be drawn up and printed after it had passed the Executive. A sub-committee was appointed to draft this document—consisting of Messrs. G. W. Foote, William Platt, and Geoffrey Mortimer. These gentlemen met the next day, and their draft was immediately transmitted to the honorary secretary, Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N. No doubt we shall be able to print it in the next number of the *Freethinker*.

Amongst those who have already joined the Committee are Robert Buchanan, George Moore, Walter Crane, Edward Carpenter, G. W. Foote, G. J. Holyoake, J. M. Robertson, George Bernard Shaw, A. E. Fletcher, John Trevor, William Platt, William Sharp, T. S. Barrett, Dr. Helen Densmore, Herbert Burrows, and H. M. Hyndman. The Committee is rapidly enlarging, and a list of additional names will be published shortly. We may add that application will be made for a writ of certiorari to remove the trial of the case to the Court of Queen's Bench.

HELL NOT DEAD YET.

THE clergy are always telling Freethinkers that in attacking the dogma of hell-fire they are flogging a dead horse. The good, kind, truthful Christian gentlemen do not use the same language to their flock. Then it is their business to keep hell well alight.

A little book lies before us at this moment, *The Blessed Sacrament, Preparation, Attendance, Giving of Thanks, Spiritual Communion, Drawn from the Writings of the Saints*, by A Parish Priest, bearing the imprint of Mowbray & Co., Farringdon-street, London, E.C. This volume has been reprinted again and again, and is used as a handbook for the Communion Service. This masterpiece starts as follows:—

"We have about us, or, to speak more truly, we are ourselves, immortal souls. We are beings who have once been born, but who now can never die. We came out of nothing, but we cannot go into nothing again: O God forbid, the merciful great God forbid, we should pass into nothing! When they who have led lives of pleasure, of covetousness, of self-willed sin—when such, I say, come to lie upon their death-beds, they may perhaps feel that awful, impossible wish that they could pass into nothing; for to be nothing were better than to be in the strong gripe of Satan, amid the intolerable heats of hell. Dying sinners may feel that their immortality is to be an unendingness of pain, of remorse, of despair; and the deadness and the dumbness of passing into nothing, though it surely would make even a dying sinner shudder, would be more bearable to think of than the life in hell—the living in fire, the feeding on fire, the breathing fire, the being clothed in fire, the thirsting for cool water where all, all is fire—above, beneath, on this side, on that side, a far-stretching country of burning fire. Fearful is the thought! fearful enough to quench lust, to cool anger, to make us out of love with money, to spoil our appetites for worldly pleasures!" etc.

Thousands of copies of this book are in circulation, principally among young people preparing for their first Communion.

Some Freethinkers fondly imagine that at the latter end of the nineteenth century the religion of the "merciful, great God" has been shorn of its worst features. This is not by any means the case. The priest still insinuates the subtle poison of hell into the minds of the rising generation, the while he flatters us by a pretended retreat.

ACID DROPS.

ABOUT five thousand children were assembled in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon. The Duchess of Portland presided over the meeting, which was joined by some adults. After some speech-making the following resolution was carried:—"That this meeting views with satisfaction the great blessings that have accrued to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales from the Acts of Parliament closing licensed premises on the Lord's Day; and hereby affirms the principle of Imperial Sunday Closing for the whole of the United Kingdom." Every child present had a bun and a box of chocolates. That was all right. But why on earth were they brought there to demonstrate against the ways and doings of their elders? It is just the method to turn them all into little prigs and pharisees.

The Duchess of Portland is a kind, amiable lady; but, like too many of her sex, she is fond of short cuts to what she desires, and is apt to rely upon compulsion instead of persuasion. It is doubtless very good of her to try to regulate common people's consumption of beer, but she had better begin with her own class, and make *them* teetotalers, before she troubles herself about the poor man's half-pint. As for Sunday drinking, we cannot see it is any worse than Monday drinking. What her ladyship and the general body of Temperance people are demanding is a whole day of trade protection for the ministers of Christianity. No wonder they have the support of the Churches.

Emperor William is hearing a little unpleasant truth from one of his subjects. Herr Harden, who is charged with *lese-majesté*, and whose paper has been confiscated, addresses an open letter to this pious, bigoted, and tyrannical monarch, telling him that he is misinformed about the actual sentiment of the nation towards him, and that he is surrounded by a clique of sycophants who flatter him as the master in every art and science.

The imperial Bombastes Furioso of Germany is too pious to follow the example of a much greater man than himself—namely, the freethinking Frederick the Great. That tough old monarch allowed all his subjects freedom of thought and speech. One day he was riding through a street in Berlin, attended by one orderly—for he was a real King of men, and disdained all idle display. A crowd was gathered in front of a shop window, and the old King pulled up his horse to see what they were gazing at. It was a caricature of himself. But he didn't fall into a passion and summon the police. He was not built that way. Besides, his achievements were such that he could safely stand a little ridicule. So he sent his orderly in with a message to the shopkeeper. "Tell him to place it lower down," said Frederick, "as the people are cricking their necks by looking up at it." He was a wise man.

One is glad to know that Admiral Sampson has formally withdrawn his charge against the Spaniards of having mutilated dead American soldiers. It was a peculiarly odious charge, which should not have been made without absolute evidence. It naturally stirred up intense indignation in the United States, and indignation of an opposite character in Spain. If people must fight they should try to fight with as much chivalry as possible. The proverb says that the Devil should have his due, and slander should be avoided even against the Spaniard, who has sins enough to answer for without such inventions.

The Rev. Charles Garnett, Congregationalist, of Manchester, has published his sermon on the death of Gladstone. There is little in it that calls for our comment, but one point may be noticed. We are told that Gladstone had great faith in God, and "hence the nobility of his political ideals." Charles Bradlaugh had no faith in God, and his political ideals were as high as those of Gladstone. Men of all political parties have faith in God. Lord Salisbury is as sincere a Christian as the late Liberal leader. Mr. Garnett did not stop to think of this. He was too much bent on making a little capital for his own faith.

Christian journals are still playing the fool over Mr. John Morley. Here is the *British Weekly* stating that Mr. Morley is profoundly impressed by the religious devotion of some of the younger Tories in the House of Commons. There can be little doubt, it says, that he looks back with compunction and shame to many of his early follies, in particular to the ridiculous article in which he announced that the author of *Supernatural Religion* had pulverised Christianity. It is pretended that these remarks are founded on a more or less private conversation with Mr. Morley—which we more or less respectfully decline to believe.

The Bishop of London talked common sense—or, if you like, sound philosophy—at the recent opening of a Home

for boys at Gunnersbury. "There was nothing," he said, "about which so much nonsense was talked as punishment. People wanted to refine punishment, they wanted it to have some qualities which it could not possibly have. Punishment could be nothing else than simply taking revenge; punishment was not reformatory." We quite agree with this; we have said it over and over again. But if punishment is simply revenge, however disguised by euphemisms, what about everlasting punishment? Is it not simply everlasting revenge? And doesn't it make the sinner a victim and God a devil? As the gentleman in the play says, We pause for a reply.

Francis Frederic Weeks, artist and photographer, has been sentenced at the Old Bailey to seven years' penal servitude for bigamy and unlawfully assaulting his own daughter. Mr. Justice Grantham said that Weeks, although professing religious sentiments, was a villain of the deepest dye.

According to the *Boston Herald*, there is a man living near Derby, Connecticut, who is engaged in making violins for the angels. He says that God has ordered a thousand. No money will tempt him to part with the instruments. They are said to be finely constructed, for he is an expert woodworker, and doubtless they will some day fall into the hands of players who are a little lower than the angels.

Canon Wilberforce preached lately in Westminster Abbey on Dives and Lazarus. He does not appear to have told his congregation that Dives had but one vice—his wealth; or that Lazarus had but two virtues—his poverty and his sore legs. What the preacher did was to denounce, without mentioning it, the firm of Bryant and May. "It is the simple Christian duty of every man," said Canon Wilberforce, "so far as is possible, to ascertain the condition of the workpeople by whose toil the dividends on his investments are accumulated." Substantially this is true enough. But why "Christian duty"? Certainly it is not the Christian duty of every man. It is not the Christian duty of any non-Christian. Such a duty is really one of common humanity. But there is no repressing the "cheek" of these Christian preachers. They generally help good movements at the eleventh hour, when it is safe and even profitable, and then they talk as if they had done everything. Plenty of Free-thinkers denounced the recklessness of commercial greed before Canon Wilberforce rendered his tardy assistance.

We note a statement in the *Sydney Bulletin*, that a rich North Lyell man named Crotty, having gone to glory perhaps sooner than he wanted to, has left his widow £100 a year, and all the rest of his wealth to the Roman Catholic Church. Mrs. Crotty went through all the bad times with her husband, and now she is treated (relatively) like a pauper, while lazy priests fatten on the estate. Her allowance is to be increased to £600 a year if she enters a convent. On this condition we dare say the priests will keep her out of one.

What a strange world this is! What a mixture it contains of good, bad, and indifferent! Saints and sinners, heroes and cowards, philosophers and fools, jostle each other in the great human crowd. Just look at the Blackwall tragedy at the launching of the new battleship *Albion*. Sightseers throng on a temporary wooden bridge, which is marked "Dangerous," and from which the police warn them in vain. The only way to get them off, as one constable said, was to "chuck" them off. There they would stand, and when the great wave came that was caused by the big ship taking the water, they and the bridge were all swept away together. So much for the fools, and now for the heroes. All sorts of men who could swim plunged into the water and fished out bodies—some living, some dead—passed them over to the people on shore, and then plunged in again to save more. Some of them nearly lost their own lives in the work of rescue. So much for the heroes, and now for the scoundrels. Some of the rescuers laid their coats and waistcoats down, the latter containing their watches; and these garments, with their contents, were walked off with by thieves. Just a fancy! A man is risking his life to save others, and a scoundrel robs him while he is doing it! Surely a robber like this is the most infamous specimen of degraded humanity; worse than a burglar, worse than a passionate murderer. To get hold of him, if possible, and quietly extinguish him in a lethal chamber, seems the only thing to be done with him. His case is utterly hopeless. There is nothing in him for reformation to work upon. And if God created him, it only shows that God has a lot to answer for.

Down at Yarmouth the Town Council wanted a strip of Church land for a much-needed street improvement. The Church, having a keen taste for mammon, asked a very heavy price, and stuck to it. Thereupon the Town Council published a list of grants of land made by it for Church purposes during recent years, with the terms in each case.

There had been five such grants, and the price paid was two hundred times less per square yard than the Church is now demanding. Dear, good, disinterested, self-sacrificing Church!

Mr. William Redmond, who belongs to a special parliamentary assembly of seven or eight Irish members in the House of Commons, writes to the *Times* as a Roman Catholic, and protests against the language used by some of the Protestant speakers in the debate on the Benefices Bill. For our part, however, we don't quite see where Mr. Redmond, or any other Irishman, comes in on this subject. The Church of England concerns the people of England, who are not going to ask Irishmen what they should say in a discussion upon its ritual and discipline.

Many years ago this same William Redmond, whose constituents at that time could all have been conveyed to Westminster in two or three omnibuses, egged on the Gladstone government of the day to prosecute the *Freethinker* for "blasphemy." Mr. Redmond, as a Catholic, doesn't mind imprisoning his religious opponents, but he cannot bear to hear his own religion so much as alluded to unflatteringly. Just as bullies are always cowards, and censorious people cannot abide criticism, so your bigot cries out that he is insulted if he hears a word of reproach.

Canon Knox-Little, who is a Ritualist High Churchman, pitches into Sir William Harcourt for saying that hundreds of parsons are false to their vows. "The honorable gentleman," he says, "is plunged in such a depth of abysmal ignorance, he has got into the habit for so long of saying what he thinks may politically 'pay,' that I have no doubt the lines between truth and falsehood are so deplorably blurred in his mind on such subjects that he really does not know what is true and what is not true." Which is bad writing as well as bad temper. But if you prick the skin of a priest you generally make acquaintance with a remarkable species of "charity."

Mr. Kensit, the Paternoster-row bookseller, who has stirred up all this hubbub, now asks for £5,000 for his crusade in favor of what he calls a Second Reformation. We thought it would come to that.

Mr. Kensit has been furnished with a bodyguard by the Order of Gideonites. "I have subscribed to their club," he said to a *Daily News* man, "where they not only practise boxing, but have all manner of games under a Dissenting chapel." Mr. Kensit said that "Father Jay has a similar club at Holy Trinity, Shoreditch, and, if I am not mistaken, its members have gone to Ritualistic churches to protect the clergy and congregations." How these Christians love one another!

Dr. Parker has just held his Jubilee at the City Temple. He has been preaching for fifty years, and doing pretty well at the business. One anthem sung at the service was written by Dr. Parker himself—"When wilt thou come again, my absent Savior?" But does the Doctor really want him to come? Would he relish the prospect of having to sell all he has and giving the proceeds to the poor? We venture to doubt it. However, there is no need for Dr. Parker to be frightened. Christ has been coming for nearly two thousand years, and in spite of Prophet Baxter he is likely to be coming for the next two thousand years. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The *Christian Budget*, a new paper, unkindly gives a list of the seven different predictions of Prophet Baxter as to the second coming of Christ. Six of them have already expired, and the seventh runs out in 1901. Baxter has been wrong six times. "It remains to be seen," the *Budget* says, "what will be the fate of the seventh prediction." That doesn't trouble Baxter, however; he has survived six exposures, and he guesses he'll get over the seventh.

Edward Baker (who is he?) writes to the *East London Advertiser* asking for "the aid of all those interested in civic righteousness to help rid Limehouse of the debasing and demoralising teachings of Secularism." This gentleman doesn't understand what he opposes. He thinks that Secularism has, and can have, no morality, because it knows nothing of God. This is so ridiculous that the editor appends a note pointing out that "we have no evidence that the leaders of the Secular party attempt to shield themselves behind the doctrine of moral irresponsibility."

When the prophet Jonah fell—or rather, was thrown—overboard the Lord prepared a great fish, which Jesus Christ said was a whale, to take him in out of the wet, to find him lodgings if not baid for three days and nights, and finally to land him safe and sound at his proper destination. Unfortunately the Lord was not so kind to the sailors on board the boat belonging to a Russian battleship, which capsized

at Noumea. Fourteen of them were instantly devoured by sharks. Yet every one of these poor fellows was probably as good as Jonah.

"Providence" has been unpleasantly active at Port Arthur. A Chinese torpedo boat was driven ashore in the recent typhoon, and 130 sailors were drowned.

The Marquis of Salisbury has received a deputation of members of parliament, who begged him to take up the cause of the clergy. They declared that the taxation of clerical incomes was excessive. His lordship admitted the grievance, but held out no hope of its being redressed in the immediate future. Poor clergy! How sad it is that some of them are compelled to practise what they preach, and earn the blessings of poverty.

Mr. Chaplin is a Tory; he is also a Christian; and perhaps in this double capacity he went down to Grays on Saturday, June 25, and gave away the prizes to the boys on board the *Exmouth* training-ship. In the course of his speech he gave utterance to the following: "They had heard it said, no doubt—and it was perfectly true—that the poor were always with us." Mr. Chaplin patronising Jesus Christ in this way is a curious spectacle.

The Peculiar People fence the question, Would they trust to prayer in the case of a broken limb? They reply that those who trust in the Lord never get one broken. Still, they are not free from accidents. One of the persons drowned at the launching of the *Albion* was Samuel Southgate, son of Elder Southgate, a well-known member of the Peculiar People at Canning Town.

The Spanish government is chiefly occupied in telling lies to the Spanish people. Official telegrams are read out in the Chambers, and afterwards published at large, which are as romantic as the most extravagant adventures of Don Quixote. After one of these performances the other day, Senor Fabie, a member of the Senate, made a flowery patriotic speech, and ended by invoking the God of Armies on behalf of those who were defending Spain's honor and rights. This gentleman forgot that the God of Armies is always on the side of the upper dog in the fight. If Spain were stronger than the United States, she would have the support of this God without praying for it.

The young King of Spain (poor boy!) made his first Communion on June 22 in a private chapel in the Palace. All the Ministers were present, and the Bishop of Sion officiated. This worthy addressed the young King, enjoining him to think of the misfortunes of his country, and to ask God to protect her. The next day the lad was confirmed in the presence of a large and distinguished assembly of princes, prelates, ministers of state, and members of the aristocracy. Confirmation is a sort of spiritual vaccination, and it doesn't always "take effect." Whether it has done so or not in this case, we have no means of ascertaining; and, to tell the truth, we are not very curious to learn.

Mr. Nevinson, who has written a striking account of the recent war between Greece and Turkey, depicts the Greek country priest as an ignorant, superstitious, mechanical gabbler. One brace of priests galloped through the service in the most irreverent fashion, and their "only audience was God and the village idiot." Query, Was this two persons or one?

At the recent International Congress of Spiritualists in London, which was honored by the patronage of that enterprising and eccentric gentleman, Mr. W. T. Stead, a paper was read by a Russian representative, who gave a circumstantial account of the doings of a "medium" who was always able to warn the Czar against Nihilist plots. "It is sad to record," says the *Daily News* reporter, "that so useful an ally to the Scotland Yard of St. Petersburg could not stand the strain, and is now suffering from softening of the brain."

Messrs. Smith and Sons, the great book and periodical distributors, have a monopoly of many railway stalls and other agencies of circulation, and they ought to be compelled to deal fairly by the public. Instead of this, they set up a press censorship of their own, as though their literary or ethical opinions were of the slightest importance to anyone but themselves. They always refused to supply customers with Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*, which, of course, was a great detriment to its sale. Generally speaking, too, they boycott the *Freethinker*, which would probably have twice or thrice its present circulation if it were only as accessible as other journals. But the firm of "Old Morality" does not stop at papers; it applies the censorship also to books. It refused, for instance, to sell Mr. George Moore's *Esther Waters*—a book which Mr. Gladstone approved and wished to see widely read. Now it boycotts Mr. Moore's new book, *Evelyn Innes*.

We have not yet had time to read Mr. Moore's new novel, but we have glanced at it, and it seems to be a very careful and conscientious piece of work. We can quite believe that the author spent three years over it and copied it out five times. That it is plain-spoken is obvious, that it is indecent is an absurdity. Mr. Moore himself, in replying to the *Westminster Gazette*, claims for his book a high moral intention. His central idea is that obedience to conscience is what differentiates man from the beasts, and he seeks to exhibit the triumph of conscience over sensual desires and vagrant affections. Is it likely, then, he asks, that "an immoral book should have been written around a profoundly moral idea?"

Sheriff Guthrie, of Glasgow, trying a case of wife assault, said he was not one of those who thought that, under all circumstances, it was a heinous offence for a man to lift his hand against his wife when she was misbehaving, but it should be done "in reason and moderation." But supposing the wife is the stronger of the two—as is sometimes the case—is it right for her to apply the same "reason and moderation" to her husband? Sheriff Guthrie should look at this side of the problem and deliver another judgment.

Some anonymous Christian, anxious for the salvation of other people's souls, advertises in the *Westminster Gazette* as follows: "Grieve for your sins, confess to God his justice in condemning you, and truly believe his Son is your own Savior. Eternity in hell is the only alternative." This advertiser should go to hell himself. We don't mean swearing. Nothing of the kind. What we mean is, that if he went to hell and came back he would be able to give us more precise information. Perhaps he wouldn't find the way back. Well, that might be awkward for him, but probably the world wouldn't put on mourning.

J. T. Gallagher, M.D., contributes some rickety verses to *Donahue's Magazine*, which are reprinted over here in the *Monitor*. He tells what Catholics have done for America, and one couplet is really a gem:—

Were not Catholics the foremost? First and only in that day
To protect and grant all people right to worship their own way?
"Foremost," "first," and "only" show that the poet is a true Irishman. But that is a minor point. The cream of the joke is its history. The Catholics in America gave the natives the choice of embracing the Romish faith or being reduced to slavery if their lives were spared. Dr. Gallagher has read the record upside down—that is, if he has read it at all.

"General" Booth's "Self-denial" plan of raising the wind is catching on in the Church of England. A new organ is wanted in Norwich Cathedral, and the cost is estimated at £3,000. To realise this sum Dean Lefroy appeals to the whole diocese. He asks the faithful to abstain during one week from spirituous drinks, tobacco, concerts, theatres, and every other luxury, and to give the amount thus saved "to the Almighty." Of course the Almighty doesn't want it, and won't get it. Dean Lefroy, however, will take it as his commission agent; and, in the eye of a priest, it comes to exactly the same thing.

The following is said to be a *bona-fide* version of a prayer offered up lately by a "Christianized Chinkee":—

Lor blessee Legislattee Councillee,
Give him evly ting bountifully,
Allee longee chilee, let him havee (twentee)
Allee samee money, havee muchee plentee;
Plentee muchee cabbagee, turnipee, and tatee,
Lor muchee blessee Council Legislattee.
But fo him Legislattee Semblee,
Lor makee him plentee muchee tremblee,
No chilee, no monee, no letter havee,
Him poor John, too muchee savee
No lettucee, no turnipee, no cabbagee.
Him for poor John too muchee savagee
No landee, no closee, no monee-boxee,
But Lor give him plentee smallee poxee.

The Church pleases to style Materialism "The Gospel of Negation." Indeed! What do we deny? A solitary fact, truth, an object of knowledge, or what? The priest cannot answer. We simply deny their bold affirmations, originated in ages of ignorance, and which at the present day are farther from being maintained by the data of science than ever before. Materialists affirm that nature is all, that it is supreme, and that it contains within itself all the elements and the cogencies needed to evolve cosmic and animal life. This the Church denies. These self-evident facts, revealed to the humblest human being by science and his own senses, it ignores. Which is the "Gospel of Negation"? Which is the true unbeliever?—O. Wettstein.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, July 3, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W. : 7.30, "The Revolt of the Parsons."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carmidia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

J. S.—Shall appear.

A. T. BARNARD.—Received with thanks.

G. BARBER.—Thanks for the copy of Rev. C. Garnett's sermon on Gladstone.

G. W. BLYTHE.—We do not agree with you that the Peculiar People ought to be fined or otherwise punished; certainly not while this is a Christian country, and while the jury are sworn in on a copy of the very Word of God which these people obey.

C. BLYTON.—Mr. Foote dropped his Lecture Scheme in favor of the Treasurer's Scheme, which has been in operation for the last twelve months. Thanks for your good wishes for the Secular incorporation.

T. SHORE.—Thanks. See paragraph.

PATRICK TREACY asks whether the Emperor of Austria is privileged to perform Mass once a year. We never heard of such a thing. Our correspondent might ask the *Tablet* or some other Catholic organ.

F. W. DONALDSON writes: "I shall be very glad indeed if you will put me down as a member of the Secular Society, Limited. I enclose herewith ten shillings, and take the opportunity to express my grateful thanks to you for what you have done in this important matter."

T. J. THURLOW.—It is good of you to interest yourself so in the Wheeler Fund.

T. FISHER.—Thanks. It is very difficult to say whether Chini-quay's book is altogether trustworthy, but we believe it is largely so. The Secular Society, Limited, is quite distinct from the N. S. S., though of course not in opposition to it. The wisest men often make very poor prophets. We expressed our view, for what it is worth, in the opening of our article last week on "The Secular Charter." Now it is best to go on with the work and await developments.

ENQUIRER.—Neither Mr. Foote nor anyone else will be the treasurer of the new incorporation, the Secular Society, Limited. The Board of Directors will have a banking account; all monies received will be paid into it, and all expended will be withdrawn, in the usual way, by cheques signed by as many members of the Board as may be decided. The Board will hold its first meeting in a few days for the purpose of admitting applicants for membership of the Society.

J. T. E. sends cheque for £2, and promises support to the extent of £5, to the Secular Society, Limited. He thinks it "the grandest move of our time, worthy of Bradlaugh and full of work for Foote." This correspondent asks whether members cannot subscribe more than 10s. annually. We reply that the 10s. for the first year, and 5s. a year afterwards, is necessary to constitute membership. Beyond that any member can donate as much as he pleases to the Society, or bequeath any sum or any property to it by will.

Mrs E. M. VANCE sends 10s. with an application for membership in the Secular incorporation.

NON DEI.—(1) Interesting as a local correspondence. Your letter should do good. Sorry you could not get in your second letter. (2) Mr. Thompson's *Democratic Readings* are excellent in their way. Of course they are intended for the million. If you want a thorough grounding in Freethought, you will have to read other books. You will find a great deal of information about the Bible in Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes* and *Bible Romances*, the footnotes of which contain references to many valuable and authoritative works. *Crimes of Christianity* will also give you much historical information. The cheapest book on the date and authorship of the Old and New Testaments is Dr. Giles's *Hebrew and Christian Records*.

H. R. CLIFTON.—List given out to printer as desired. Your little *Secular News* is a good idea. We wish it success. Thanks for your handsome reference to the new Secular incorporation.

A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to hear that the fellow Taylor failed in his attempt to break up your fine meeting on Pockham Rye last Sunday. We can well believe that the police kept a sharp eye upon him.

W. COX.—Glad to hear that a subscription to the Wheeler Fund is coming from the Liverpool Branch.

JAMES NEATF, of the Bethnal Green Branch, an East London stalwart, applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. "I think the venture a good one," he says, "and deserving a good start-off from Freethinkers all over the country."

J. D. LEGGETT applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, which he wishes all success.

Mrs. GLADYS DAWSON, Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, London, W.O., is the honorary treasurer of the Free Press Defence Committee. Subscriptions in aid of Mr. Redborough's defence are urgently needed. Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N., is the honorary secretary.

Dr. W. W. HARDWICKE writes: "I have just read your scheme of the Secular Society, Limited, and am only astonished that it has never been proposed before."

S. FULTON.—The balance of the old Bradlaugh Memorial subscription, amounting to about £60, is locked up in the Birkbeck Bank in the names of G. W. Foote, George Anderson, and W. H. Reynolds and cannot be withdrawn because the last refuses to sign the necessary document. No such difficulty can possibly arise in connection with the Secular Society, Limited.

T. ROBERTSON, secretary of the N. S. S. Glasgow Branch, sends 10s. with application for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. "If you succeed," he says, "in the flotation of the Society, you will have done much to nullify the disabling effect of the Blasphemy Laws."

F. SMALLMAN writes: "I desire to become a member of the Secular Society, Limited, as per your 'Secular Charter' printed in last week's *Freethinker*, and enclose herewith cheque for 10s., the amount of the entrance fee. If you have a separate prospectus with the Memorandum and Articles of Association printed, I shall be glad to receive a copy of the same." We have sent a copy, and shall be glad to send other copies to serious applicants.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Awakener of India—Liberator—Truthseeker (Bradford)—Sydney Bulletin—People's Journal—Isle of Man Times—Solidarity—Nelson Chronicle—Boston Investigator—Christian Budget—Progressive Thinker—Freidenker—Adult—New Century—Weekly Citizen.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectured to a very good audience, considering the warm weather, at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, his subject being "The Ladies of the Bible." Mr. Harry Brown occupied the chair, and spoke with tact and brevity—two excellent qualities in a chairman. The lecture was often amusing; at any rate, the audience indulged in plenty of laughter. Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (July 3), taking for his subject "The Revolt of the Parsons." The present rumpus in the Church of England will be dealt with, and the true character and position of the State Church proved from history and statistics.

Mr. George Anderson, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, well-known to most Freethinkers, writes to say that he wishes to become a member of the Secular Society, Limited. We have much pleasure in recording the fact.

Several others have applied to become members of the Secular Society, Limited. We hope a hundred more applications, at least, will be received during the next two or three weeks. For the present they should be sent direct to Mr. Foote, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. As soon as the Board of Directors has admitted the first batch of members, and appointed a secretary, an announcement will be made in our columns.

Charles Darwin was really a far more important man than William Ewart Gladstone. His ideas were seminal. He was a bloodless revolutionist. He moved the mind of the whole world from his quiet Kentish village. His fame has gone forth to all lands, and it will grow with the ages. Posterity will mention him as they mention Sir Isaac Newton.

A monument to Darwin has just been unveiled in the Zoological Gardens, Antwerp, in the presence of all the authorities in the city. It consists of a bust of the great Evolutionist being crowned with a wreath of laurels by a beautiful female figure representing Mankind. The memorial is the work of M. Lambeaux, the greatest living Belgian sculptor.

We have received a new number of the *Awakener of India*, edited by N. K. Ramasami Aiyar, High Court Vakil, at Madras. We have also received a letter from the editor,

who says—and we can easily believe him—that it is very uphill work to oppose superstition in India. However, he means to do all he can, though it costs him time and money, as his little magazine has to be circulated gratuitously. He appeals to the educated classes with a view to stemming the tide of Revivalism and Mysticism which threatens to hamper the beneficial effects of Western science and civilisation.

The *Awakener of India* for June contains the following: "It is with deep sorrow that we record the death of Mr. J. M. Wheeler, the able sub-editor of the *Freethinker*. In him we have lost an honest and learned advocate of Freethought. Truly he was 'one of the heralds of a new and more glorious day for humanity.' We sincerely sympathise with Mr. Foote in his irreparable loss."

We have just received by one post four separate copies of the *Liberator*, which is so bravely conducted by our old friend and colleague, Joseph Symes, at Melbourne. In the last of these numbers he writes: "Our next issue will complete the fourteenth year of the *Liberator*. All Freethinkers must rejoice at the long lease of life we have had. If possible, I will run it for sixteen years more, and so make it thirty. If I cannot do that, I will do what I am able. *Nil Desperandum!*" We are quite sure friend Joseph will keep his word. By the way, how amusing it is to read that he is reported to have become a convert to the Salvation Army. Mr. Symes makes great fun of this preposterous rumor.

The Liverpool Branch has discontinued its Sunday evening meetings, which will be resumed the first week in September. The annual picnic of this Branch takes place next Sunday (July 10). Brakes will leave Woodside at two o'clock prompt for Burton Woods, Cheshire. The tickets are 3s. 6d. each. This includes a knife and fork tea. Local friends meaning to join the party should apply at once for tickets to Mr. Stocker, newsagent, Vauxhall-road, or to Mr. Hammond, 26, Sandheys-street, Kirkdale.

The Manchester Branch has arranged for a trip to Chester on July 10. Friends will assemble at the Central Station at 9 a.m. All information can be obtained from the secretary, Mrs. Pegg, 15 Mytton-street, Hulme.

THE ADDRESS.

(WITH APOLOGIES TO A CERTAIN CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE MAN.)

A LECTURER discovered at a street corner with a portable platform, and bottle of water hanging at side. An audience gathering, he mounts.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I have very much pleasure in standing here before you this afternoon—this Sabbath afternoon—and I sincerely hope and trust that the few blessed words I shall address to you will be to our mutual benefit, for Jesus Christ's sake. (*A deep voice: "Amen."*)

Friends, it is indeed impossible not to feel an involuntary admiration for the vigorous exercise of the human intellect. (*A voice: "He's a college bloke, Bill."*) Bodily labor, or even moderate exercise, seems to the superficial observer rather to waste and exhaust, and to destroy the body, than to sustain and preserve it; yet experience proves that exercise is necessary to the maintenance of health. In like manner, active philosophical discussion appears at first sight to be injurious to our faith; but these mental movements are needed to promote the well-being of the intellect. (*A voice: "Yus, Tom, he's a long-un."*) What better subject, I would ask, can we choose as a mental gymnasium this afternoon than the precious blood of Christ, which, as we know, washes away the sins of the world? "Come unto me all ye that labor, and I will give you rest." What comfort in these words, dear brothers and sisters. (*The deep voice: "Amen."*) *Bill: "There's the blood, Tom; I knowed he'd chuck that in."* Oh! it is not for us to engage in disputes about the great theological questions; we have the eye of faith, we are washed in the blood, and our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (*The audience gradually diminishes, those that remain engaging in conversation. The lecturer is heard with difficulty, thus: "Though your sins be as scarlet..... living b'od..... Almighty and All-merciful God..... heatben philo-sophers of the present day..... hotbeds of Atheism..... Bradlaugh..... damnation..... eternal bliss in the bosom of the Father," and so on. At the close of the harangue questions are invited.*)

A GENTLEMAN—"Will the lecturer kindly tell me whether Christians believe in ghosts?"

LECTURER (*indignantly*)—"No. Certainly not."

GENTLEMAN—"Well, but what about the Holy Ghost?"

LECTURER—"Ah! the Holy Ghost is not a ghost. He is a spiritual being, and forms a part of the Godhead—the Holy Trinity. Does not our friend understand? Three in one and one in three." (*General dissatisfaction at this reply and some laughter, in which Bill and Tom join*)

LECTURER (*with a bland smile as much as to say, Now I'll corner him*)—"Perhaps the gentleman will kindly step up and explain what he means by ghosts."

GENTLEMAN—"Really, as to the nature and habits of ghosts, I know nothing. I account for their existence in this way:—Man is such a social animal that he thinks this earth is too solitary even in the most populous cities. Therefore, he often peoples it with a good store of spirits and demons, that he may have other company besides his fellow men." (*Bravo! and loud and continued applause, during which the lecturer is understood to say something about levity, and walks off. Exeunt severally.*)

ARTHUR T. BARNARD.

CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE WEDDED.

THE world arose at God's command, to please his heartless whim.

Across the wastes of Time he looked (lo, nought is hid from him),

And he saw the certain carnival of suffering, sin, and death, Which shall only cease when the last live thing has drawn its last sad breath;

Yet he said: "To bloody strife foredoomed, arise, O earthly host,

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

He fashioned sentient myriads from earth's unconscious clay,

Formed that the strong might kill the weak; the weak, still weaker slay.

By God-implanted instinct driven, this God-created rout Escaped from death by dealing death; lived but by life crushed out;

And murder filled the teeming land and the sea from coast to coast

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

As likest God in face and form, so likest him in mind, Man all created things outstripped in the slaughter of his kind.

Man armed himself with fire and sword, and desolation spread,

Till the world was black with cities burned, and with precious life-blood red.

And the good Lord God made helpless babes and mothers writhe and roast

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The priestly hands in Paradise upraised to bless God's name Once turned the rack, applied the screw, and lit the torture-flame.

There's not a nerve that thrills this frame with awful agony But was searched and seared by the priests of God when their hellish wills were free—

All for the glory of the Lord, their hope and joy and boast, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The earth is one stupendous amphitheatre of strife; A mighty Coliseum where all creatures fight for life.

Yet every act direct from God Almighty must proceed, He energises the energy for every thought and deed.

Unopposed, unaided, this fiend misrules, with his murder scheme engrossed,

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

EX-RITUALIST.

The Rev. Dr. Thompson, of New York, tells the following story: "A colored woman, having wandered into a very respectable church, was inspired by the music and began to throw her arms about in wild gesticulation. The sexton telling her to keep still, she replied that she could not; she had got religion. The sexton said excitedly: 'Madam, you must keep still or go out. You ought to know that this is no place to get religion. This is a church.'

A teacher in a Sunday-school of an Episcopal church said to one of her pupils: "James, what good thing—what great thing, are you willing to give up as a sacrifice during the Lenten season?" James meditated about ten seconds and responded: "I think I'll give up going to Sunday-school."

A devout Episcopalian mother was teaching her little five-year-old her Sunday-school lesson. "I don't like God, anyway," said the maiden. "Why not?" asked the horrified mother. "Because I don't think it was very nice of him to send his son Jesus down here to be knocked around and abused so, while he stayed up in heaven and had a good time!"

SOLOMON AND THE SATANS.

WHEN Solomon ascended the throne, Jerusalem must have been a wretched place, without any art or architecture, with a swarming mongrel population, mainly of paupers. The holy ark was kept in a tent, and the altar of unhewn stone accurately symbolised the rude condition of the people, among whom Solomon could find no workmen of skill enough to build a temple. It is not easy to forgive him for compelling a good many of them into the public works; but it was probably no more than a national conscription of the unemployed paupers in Jerusalem, chiefly on fortifications for their own defence. There was apparently no slave mart, and it seems rather better to conscript people for public industries than, in our modern way, for cutting their neighbors' throats. Most of them were the remnants of tribes that once occupied the region, much despised by the Israelites, and probably they looked on Solomon's plan of building Jerusalem into a city of magnificence, giving everybody employment and support, as a grand Socialistic movement. An Ephraimite, Jeroboam, who tried to get up a revolt in Jerusalem, does not seem to have found any adherents. The only people who complained of any yoke—and their complaint is only heard of after some centuries—were the priest-ridden and prophet-ridden Israelites who had become fanatically excited about the strange shrines built for the king's foreign wives, and the splendid carvings and forms in the temple itself. Probably the first two commandments in the decalogue were put there with special reference to some Solomonic cult with an æsthetic taste for graven images and foreign shrines.

There can be little doubt that Solomon, by his patronage of these foreign religions, detached them from the cruel rites traditionally associated with them. Among all the censures pronounced against him none attributes to him any human sacrifices, though such are ascribed to David and Samuel (1 Samuel xv. 33, 2 Samuel xxi. 9). The earliest rebukes of sacrifice in the Bible are those attributed to Solomon. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice" (Proverbs xxi. 3). "By mercy and truth iniquity is atoned for" (Proverbs xvi. 6). "Mercy and truth preserve the king; he upholdeth his throne by mercy" (Proverbs xx. 28). "Deliver them that are carried away to death: those that are ready to be slain forbear not thou to save" (Proverbs xxiv. 11). "Love covereth all transgressions" (Proverbs x. 12).

Solomon may not indeed have written these and the many similar maxims ascribed to him, but they are among the most ancient sentences in the Bible, and they would not have been attributed to any man who had not left among the people a tradition of humanity and benevolence. Had the royal "idolater" or his wives stained their shrines with human blood, the prophets would have been eager to declare it. Two acts of cruelty are ascribed to Solomon's youth in the book of Kings: one of these, the execution of Shimei, carried out his father's order, but only after Shimei had been given fair warning with means of escape; while the other, the execution of Adonijah (Solomon's brother), if true, is too much wrapped up in obscurity to enable us to judge its motives; but it cannot be regarded as historic.

The second historiographer of Kings, setting out to record Jahveh's anger about Solomon's foreign wives and shrines (1 Kings xi.), says, with unconscious humor, that Jahveh raised Satan against him—two Satans. One of these was Hadad, an Edomite, the other Rezon, a Syrian. The writer says that this was when Solomon was old, his wives having then turned away his heart after other gods. Fortunately, however, this writer has embodied in his record some items, evidently borrowed, which contradict his Jahvistic legend. One of these tells us that Hadad had been carried away from Edom to Egypt, when David and his Captain Joab massacred all the males in Edom; that he there married the sister of Pharaoh, and that he returned to his own country on hearing of the death of David and Joab. When this occurred, Solomon, so far from being old, was about eighteen. The Septuagint (Vatican MS.) says that Hadad "reigned in the land of Edom." We may conclude, then, that, on the return of this heir to the throne, Edom declared its independence, nor is there any indication that Solomon tried to prevent this. Another contradiction of this writer is a note

inserted about Rezon the Syrian: "He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon." Not, therefore, a Satan raised up by Jahveh against Solomon when in old age he had turned to other gods. Rezon "reigned over Syria," and there is no indication of any expedition against him sent out by Solomon. Bishop Colenso (*Pentateuch*, vol. iii., p. 101), in referring to these points, remarks that we do not read of a single warlike expedition undertaken by Solomon.*

The remark (1 Kings xi.) about the Satans set against Solomon is more applicable to the Shiloh traitors, Abijah and Jeroboam. Jeroboam—a servant whom Solomon had raised to high office—was instigated by Abijah, a "prophet" neglected by Solomon, to his ungrateful treason. Abijah pretended that he had a divine revelation that he (Jeroboam) was to succeed Solomon on account (of course!) of the king's shrines to Istar, Chemosh, and Milcom. If the narrative were really historic, nothing could be more "Satanic" than the lies and treacheries related of those self-seekers. Were the story true, the failure of these divinely-appointed "Satans" to overthrow the kingdom of Solomon, who did not arm against them, must have been due to his popularity. In after times this impunity of the glorious "idolater" would have to be explained; consequently we find Jahveh telling Solomon that, offended as he was by the shrines, he would spare him for his father's sake, but would rend the kingdom, save one tribe, from his (Solomon's) son. That this should be immediately followed by the raising up of "Satans" to harass Solomon and Israel, Jahveh having just said the trouble should be postponed till after the king's death, suggests that the whole account of these quarrels (1 Kings xi. 14-40) is a late interpolation. Up to that point the old record is unbroken. "He had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon" (1 Kings iv. 24, 25).

Jahveh, in his personal interview with Solomon (1 Kings xi. 11-13), said: "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." That is, as explained by the "prophet" Abijah, to Jeroboam. As a retribution and check on idolatry, the selection, besides violating Jahveh's promise to David (1 Chronicles xxii.), was not successful; after the sundering of Israel and Judah into internecine kingdoms, Jeroboam, King of Israel, established idolatry more actively than either Solomon or his son Rehoboam. On Jeroboam, his selected Nemesis, Jahveh inflicted his characteristic punishment of visiting the sins of the fathers on the children: as David was left the seduced wife whose husband he had murdered, while his son was executed; as Solomon was left in peaceful enjoyment of his kingdom and none of the sinful shrines destroyed, while his son bore the penalty; so now Jeroboam, elect of Jahveh, built golden calves, surpassed Solomon's offences, and vengeance was taken on his son Abijah, who died. This Abijah left a son, Baasha, who, undeterred by these fatalities, continued the "idolatries" with impunity for the twenty-four years of his reign, the punishment falling on his son Elah, who was slain after only two years' reign by his military servant Zimri. And this Zimri, who thus carried on Jahveh's decree against idolatry, himself continued "in the ways of Jeroboam," the shrines and idols themselves being meanwhile unvisited by any executioner or iconoclast until some centuries later.

In Josiah there arrived a king, of the line of David, who might seem by his fury against idolatry to be another "man after God's own heart." He pulverised the images and the shrines, he "sacrificed the priests on their own altars," he even dug up the bones of those who had ministered at such altars and burnt them. He trusted Jahveh absolutely. He went to the prophetess Hulda, who told him that he should be "gathered to his grave in peace." He was slain miserably by the King of Egypt, to whom the country then became subject.

* The marriage of Hadad with Pharaoh's sister, and that of Solomon shortly after with Pharaoh's daughter, might naturally, Colenso says, lead to some amicable arrangement between these two young princes, representing respectively the ancient domains of Jacob and Esau, and the Bishop adds the pregnant suggestion: "Thus also would be explained another phenomenon in connection with this matter which we observe in the Jehovistic portions of Genesis—viz., the reconciliation of Esau and Jacob" (Genesis xxxiii.). That Solomon was on good terms with Edom appears by the fact that his naval station was in that land (1 Kings ix. 26).

Josephus ascribed the act of Josiah, in hurling himself against an army that was not attacking him, to fate. The fate was that Josiah, having exterminated the wizards and fortune-tellers, repaired to the only dangerous one among them, because she pretended to be a "prophetess," inspired by Jahveh. Her assurances led him to believe himself invulnerable, personally, and that in his lifetime Jerusalem would not suffer the woes she predicted. Josiah, "of the house of David," seems to have thought that his zeal in destroying the shrines which his ancestor Solomon had introduced, mainly Egyptian, would be so grandly consummated if he could destroy a Pharaoh, that he insisted on a combat. Pharaoh-Necho sent an embassy to say that he was not his enemy, but on his way to fight the Assyrian: "God commanded me to hasten; forbear thou from opposing God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not." Here, however, was the fanatic's opportunity for an Armageddon; Pharaoh had appealed to what Solomon would have regarded as their common deity, but which to Josiah meant a chance to pit Jahveh against the God of Egypt. On Jahveh's invisible forces he must have depended for victory. So perished Josiah, and with him the independence of his country.

Solomon, the Prince of Peace, had made the house of Pharaoh the ally of his country. Josiah carries his people back under Egyptian bondage. Solomon had built the metropolitan Temple, whose shrines, symbols, works of art, represented a catholicity to all races and religions—peace on earth, goodwill to man. Josiah, panic-stricken about a holy book purporting to have been found in the Temple, concerning which the King by his counsellors consulted a female fortune-teller, makes a holocaust of all that Solomon had built up.

—*The Open Court.*

MONCURE D. CONWAY.

BOOK CHAT.

SARAH GRAND'S latest work, *The Beth Book* (Wm. Heinemann, Bedford-street, W.C.), continues in good demand at the libraries and the booksellers. The pious spleen vented upon it in some of the reviews will be easily understood by anyone who has read the book itself. Beth, otherwise "Elizabeth Caldwell Maclure, a woman of genius," having arrived at the maturity of her intellectual powers, develops a disbelief in dogmatic theology. "Churches Beth had come to look upon, not with distrust, but with indifference, as an ineffectual experiment of man's. She could find no evidence of a holier spirit or a more divine one in the Church than in any other human institution for the propagation of instruction. The Church has never been superior to the times, never as far advanced as the best men of the day, never a leader, but rather an opposer of progress, hindering when ideas were new, and only coming in to help when workers without had proved their discoveries, and it was evident that credit would be lost by refusing to recognise them. There is no cruelty the Church has not practised, no sin it has not committed, no ignorance it has not displayed, no inconsistency it has not upheld, from teaching peace and countenancing war, to preaching poverty and piling up riches" (pp. 522-3).

"The God of the Hebrews," says Beth, "what is his history? He loved cruelty and bloodshed. The innocent animals first suffered in his service, but, not content with that, he went from bad to worse, as men do, and ended by demanding human sacrifice, the sacrifice of his own son. And for that specially we are required to adore him, although it must be clear to the commonest capacity to-day that the worship of such a deity is devil-worship. I do not say there is no God; I only say this is not God—this blood-lover, this son-slayer, this blind omniscience, this impotent omnipotence, this merciful cruelty, this meek arrogance, this peaceful combatant; this is not God, but man. The mind of man wars with the works of God to mar them. Man tries to make us believe that he is made in the image of God; but what happened was just the reverse.....He projected an image of himself into space, and was so delighted with his own appearance from that point of view that he called it God, and fell down and worshipped it. If you would understand man, consider God; if you would know his God, study man" (p. 500).

It is not only Beth, however, who gives bold utterance to heterodox truths. There is an artist—the only male person sketched in anything like agreeable colors in the book—who is equally outspoken. He says: "It is true that religion

culminates in human sacrifice, both here and in Africa, and for refinement of horror we have here the literal bloody sacrifice of a son by the father. But that is not God, as you say; that is the ultimate of the priest. And the priest is the same at all times, in all ages, beneath all veneers of civilisation. His credit depends upon a pretence to power. He is not a humble seeker after truth, but a bigoted upholder of error and an impudent time-server. He destroys the scientific discoverer in one age; in the next he finds his own existence is threatened because he refuses to acknowledge that the discoverer was right; then he confesses the truth, and readjusts his hocus-pocus to suit it" (p. 500).

Fitzgerald's version of Omar Khayyam—the old Persian poet, and "large infidel," as Tennyson called him—was published by Quaritch in 1859. Only a few copies were printed, but none were sold, and eight years afterwards Quaritch threw the whole remainder into the penny box outside his door. It is said that Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the painter-poet, found them there, and they were soon bought up. Early in the present year a copy in the original wrappers was sold at Sotheby's for £21, and the purchaser was Quaritch!

"With a Guitar, to Jane," is the title of one of Shelley's beautiful personal poems. Jane Williams was the wife of his friend Williams, who was drowned with the poet in the bay of Lerici. She kept the guitar given her by Shelley till her death, when it was bought by her grandson, Mr. J. W. Williams. An American Shelleyite, Mr. Edward Silsbee, wished to purchase it recently, but Mr. Williams would only part with it to a public institution. Mr. Silsbee agreed to this condition. He bought it and presented it to the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

The *Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) for July is as interesting as usual. A new writer, Mr. A. G. Whyte, contributes a thoughtful article on "The Existence of the Soul." The book reviews are numerous and well done.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"PROVIDENCE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Drewell has written with some warmth in reply to my letter, but there is a ring of genuine humanity in it which I appreciate, although I cannot agree with his conclusions.

It would seem that Mr. Drewell has not perused the letter which appeared some time since in the *Freethinker* upon the attributes of God. For the definition of Jehovah, which he requires, I say that he has neither form nor sex, but is like magnetism—a power felt but not seen, and pervading all space. He thinks and controls, but I should say knows neither love nor hatred in himself, these being passions of perishable beings. Having no sex, it is yet fitting to use the most dignified pronoun in referring to him.

"Maker" was a misprint for *matter* in my letter, which somewhat qualifies my observations.

I am convinced that the amount of matter which exists in the universe has always existed, and probably the planets also. Jehovah did not *create* matter, but he has been co-existent with it, and has controlled it for all time. I never mentioned *creation*, and therefore there is no occasion for me to "know of a time when the universe was not, and needed creating or making."

Without occupying space to quote our friend's remarks, I will endeavor to follow them.

As to droughts and floods.—Jehovah's laws must *broadly* govern the elements, because they are on a mighty scale, and in the commotions of nature I submit that the good effects outweigh the bad. Storms are necessary to purify the atmosphere, and probably also the seas, and distribute the irrigating waters over the face of the earth. Continual calms and fine weather lead to pestilence, especially in thickly-populated places. A hurricane which does much damage in one district will probably drive great volumes of aqueous vapor into regions where they are greatly required. It is quite certain that if Jehovah controlled the elements down to small details, he would not give universal satisfaction. The weather that suited Farmer Jones's turnips exactly would be injurious to Farmer Brown's shocks of corn. They must take their chances of the season's averages. Even a rough season has its compensations. The soil and the trees have a longer rest, and are likely to bear well the next year. The hardest oaks and the hardiest men grow in our stormy zone.

Volcanic action is caused by the spontaneous heating of certain rocks in the immense bulk of the earth—not by the cooling of a molten world, which is the pet theory of the present day. Such a declining heat would never revive at

any point, and the rock crust would have sealed up itself long ago. This volcanic action, we know, sometimes causes enormous destruction, in the way of eruptions, earthquakes, and abnormal waves; but without it, instead of being nobly diversified, the world would be now, and without a continuation of it would become in the future (by the wearing down and disintegration of the higher parts), an uninhabitable surface of marsh and water.

With regard to diseases.—Unless the beings on the earth were immortal, diseases and failures of nature must occur, and not a few of these are brought about by the sufferers or the progenitors of them. The increase of animals, if not kept in check by destroyers, would have to be kept down solely by pestilence. The destroyers sometimes have forms and qualities which are more attractive than those of the animals destroyed. Is not the sprightly terrier more attractive than the wild rabbit or the rat?

With regard to the great mortality amongst infants.—Can this be said to be an unmixed evil in a country which is so crowded that the majority of honest workers can only live from hand to mouth, and fiercely compete in the struggle for existence until they are simply slaves, without any independence, comfort, or time for healthy recreation? Surely it is better for a few to live well than for a number to live ill.

As to the actions of criminals which Mr. Drewell comments upon.—He is mistaken in thinking that I suppose God "overrules all these things." He permits them to occur, because otherwise he must take away all free agency from mankind, constitute himself the controller of all their actions, and be continually performing miracles. Man has extra advantages, but he has made bad use of them, and I, for one, have no great faith in the supposed future development of the human race.

The next paragraph compels me to refer to myself, because Mr. Drewell may suppose that I have been so comfortable in this life as to take a too complacent view of things. Unfortunately this would be a mistake. I have not, it is true, had a serious illness for thirty-three years; but for over eighteen years I have suffered from chronic catarrh, which has destroyed the sense of smell, and is a most wearisome complaint. I consider it is incurable. I do not expect Jehovah to relieve it, although I believe in him, because if he did so millions of others would also be entitled to relief. And, further, if he cured once, why not twice, or altogether, and so make man immortal? Fancy a world crowded with an undying race who would live long enough to curse their immortality.

I have heard it suggested that old age should end our days, but I do not see that it would improve the condition of mankind; it certainly would not improve their moral character. The aged, as a rule, are neither very useful, ornamental, nor comfortable in their existence, and I think really sensible people do not desire to live to become very old.

Again, if premature death is an unnecessary evil, all animals ought to be allowed to die of old age. The result would not be satisfactory.

Now to the main question. Mr. Drewell, who is a *thinking* and intelligent man, has failed to show *how* the elements of the world could be managed or utilised so as to produce better results than they do at present. Therefore is it not reasonable for me to infer that the organisation of the universe, with its orderly precision, could not be carried on by the chance action of *unthinking* matter?

The orbital motions of the planets are, by some scientific men, vaguely ascribed to gravitation and attraction; but it appears to me that the bottom is knocked out of the theory by the fact that the sun (the centre of our system) rotates upon its axis. Its own gravitation could not cause this circular motion, and the attraction of revolving planets would not cause it, but on the contrary tend to impede it, as anyone can prove to himself by causing a small iron ball or nut to rotate upon an axis, and placing several magnets near it in different directions.

I must continue to believe in Jehovah, but do not believe in the immortality of anything but Himself.

JNO. C. EDGLEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* of June 12 there appeared some correspondence, over the signature of John C. Edgley, inviting any reader of the *Freethinker* to write an article showing how the elements on an earth could be better managed, in some respects, than they are at present, without counterbalancing disadvantages. Absurd as such a challenge appears to me, I will, nevertheless, endeavor to gratify the curiosity of the writer.

But before I proceed I will disavow any intention of claiming to be qualified to enter into competition with Mr. J. C. E.'s maker and controller of the elements, as I am not particularly inclined to start reasoning from a premise which I consider fictitious. For it is nothing but fiction to represent natural forces, and the qualities of objects around us, as commands of a supernatural personal being. Now

for the asked-for suggestions as to the direction in which a Freethinker considers Mr. Edgley's controller of the elements could have manipulated the said elements in a more advantageous manner than at present:—

1. I should have suggested making good health contagious, instead of loathsome diseases.

2. I should have advised Providence, as a point of justice, to confine the action of heredity to good qualities only—mental as well as physical, so as not to make the innocent suffer for the guilty.

3. I should have suggested the arrangement of the elements in such a way that such insane climatic conditions as are experienced every day, and at the cost of untold misery to millions, could not exist.

These are only a few of the improvements I would submit to the consideration of Providence, and in order to put them to a practical test I would not object to having my scheme for the controlling of the elements opposed to that of Providence, in a general poll. Which would win?

S. HARTMANN.

THE BEDBOROUGH CASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—While highly approving of our President's action in the above, let me advise all (especially those attending lectures) never to be without a copy of the *Freethinker* for June 12, wherein his views are plainly expressed with regard to contents of the publications, etc., named. If they *fortyfy* themselves with fifty copies, they will all be long worn out before their use is gone, by replying and showing Christian opponents what your views *are*, for they (the Christians) will pick out parts quite irrespective of any connection, and say: "See what your President approves"; "This is what the N. S. S. defends," etc., etc., etc.

UNCLE TIM (Exeter).

The Eagle and the Lion.

The cartoon in a late number of the *New York Life* shows the British lion and the American eagle walking together on an eminence with the kingdom of the world outstretched at their feet. The following lines accompany the cartoon:—

The Eagle and the Old Lion
Went walking hand in hand.
They laughed like anything to see
Such quantities of land.
"If it could all belong to us,
I think it would be grand!"
"If seven kings with seven hosts
Should want the reason why,
Do you suppose," the Eagle said,
"We'd funk it, you and I?"
"I doubt it," said the Old Lion,
And winked a humble eye.

Religion for the Kilted.

The Scottish Church is far from unmindful of the spiritual necessities of her kilted warriors; but a committee has been appointed to remedy any defects which may have hitherto been overlooked. Accordingly, they have just issued a book of devotions for the use of those soldiers who profess adherence to the tenets of the "Established Kirk," apparently the only persons either worth praying for, or not long past redemption. The result of the compiler's labors takes the outward form of a somewhat bulky volume, three hundred pages in length. This appears to be chiefly made up of extracts from the inspiring works of Jeremy Taylor, Baxter, and Thomas à Kempis. As to the necessity of the work, it is scarcely within my province to express any definite opinion. I cannot, however, help doubting if all the pious exhortations contained therein are as appropriate as they might be, or whether they are so great an improvement on those to be found in the prayer-book at present in use. One orison, in particular, appears to strike "Tommy" as being a little out of place, where he is directed to pray that he "be delivered from the snares of idleness." I am told that the compilers need not unduly distress themselves upon this point.—*The Critic*.

In a most interesting article on oratory in a late number of *The Cosmopolitan*, the author refers to Ingersoll as follows: "Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll is, without doubt, one of the greatest popular orators now living. Ingersoll will never receive the full credit due to his great success as an orator during the present generation, as his vehement assaults on the Christian religion have aroused so many and such powerful enmities. But without regarding his creed, judging him solely by his power as an orator, no nation can to-day produce his equal. There is poetry, wit, humor, sarcasm, and tenderest pathos in nearly every lecture he delivers, whether on religion or politics."

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 Revolt of the Parsons."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, The Holborn Thespians in "A Pair of Spectacles."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 8.15, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Christian Criminals." Peckham Rye: E. Pack—3.15, "Holy Liars"; 6.30, "What is Morality?"
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. Ramsey, "Christian Evidences."

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, W. Ramsey.
FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 8.15, A. Guest, "The Propagation of the Gospel."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, Stanley Jones.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 8.30, R. P. Edwards.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Kidley-road): 11.30, O. Cohen.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Historical Review of the Old Testament."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "Creation: Is it True?"

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH: Picnic to Holte Fleet, from New-street Station (Midland Railway), 7.25 a.m.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Lecture-room, corner of Raby and Parker-streets, Byker): 7, J. Reid, "From Christianity to Secularism."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 7, Meeting of members.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Heaford—11, "A Defence of Freethought"; 3, "The Vindictive Spirit in Religion"; 7, "The Mistakes of Jesus." Tea at 5. The morning lecture (weather permitting) will be given near the Monolith.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Election of officers.

Lecturers' Engagements.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—July 3, m, Mile End; 10, m, Mile End; 17, m, and a, Hyde Park; e, Kilburn; 31, m, Camberwell; a, Peckham Rye; e, Camberwell.

T. J. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—July 3, e, Mile End Waste; 24, e, Mile End Waste.

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