

The Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

WILLIAM AT JERUSALEM.

EMPEROR WILLIAM is perhaps the most pious monarch in Europe. His father was somewhat tainted with Free-thought, as well as inclined towards Liberalism in politics—if the two do not always go together. But there is none of this nonsense about William. He never speaks of his father, at least in public. He prefers to forget that unfortunate link in the Hohenzollern chain. His ideal is his grandfather and namesake, the first William; that pious and pipe-clay old gentleman, for whom Bismarck supplied brains, foresight, and timely resolution. William has a tremendous belief in the efficacy of the Christian religion, particularly as an invisible but powerful support of the Hohenzollern throne. He says prayers at home and on board his yacht. He has even preached in the absence of a professional exhorter. Still more exemplary, if possible, is the piety of his wife. The Empress has devoted much of her time and means to the cause of religion. She has added considerably to the number of churches in Berlin. What she cannot do is to fill them. The people of Berlin are not churchgoers. They prefer spending Sunday in the beer-gardens, listening to good music, instead of being shut up in a dismal house of God, and undergoing dreary discourses about the day of judgment and the wrath to come.

One result of William's piety, however, is that religion is rather more ostentatious in Germany than it used to be, and Freethought a little less exuberant. The old law of blasphemy has of late years been frequently enforced, and several Freethinkers have been fined and imprisoned for saying what is thought by one-half of the whole male population of Germany. Still worse is it in respect to the law against "insulting the Emperor." No such sensitive vanity as William's has occupied a throne since the days of Nero. It is not safe to doubt his being as great a poet as Goethe, as great a musician as Beethoven, as great a soldier as Napoleon, or as handsome as the Apollo Belvedere. Hundreds of men have been imprisoned for speaking of him with what is called a want of proper respect. Loyalty in king-deluded Germany—as Shelley styled it—must be more than negative; it must be positive, or it becomes *disloyalty*. Only the other day the editor of the principal comic paper in Berlin was sent to gaol for a mild satire on William's declaration that only Christians could be good soldiers. The shades of Alexander and Julius Cæsar—pre-Christian warriors, and of Napoleon and Frederick the Great—both sceptics, were simply made to smile at this imperial utterance. William cultivates the high and mighty attitude. I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark! It is almost a case of "me and my God." He likes to fill the stage and monopolise the footlights, and woe betide anyone who is caught grinning, either at the stage-wings or in the auditorium.

It was only natural that pious William should desire to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and see the various spots that were hallowed by the real or imaginary feet of Jesus Christ and his twelve Apostles—including, alas, the mercenary and miserable Judas; after whose death, we suppose, the Master had to perambulate the country afresh before ascending, in order to reconsecrate the aforesaid spots, just as a church has to be reconsecrated after it has been desecrated by a suicide. William set out on this glorious expedition with his wife, a large escort, and a heavy baggage, which taxed the powers of the largest railway engine.

The King of Heaven visited Palestine, *via* Bethlehem, in a far less striking fashion; creeping in, so to speak, through a stable in the company of camels and jackasses. But the King of Prussia cannot cut such an ignominious figure. He goes with pomp and ceremony. Instead of having one poor garment, like Jesus Christ, he has a large assortment of costumes, some of which are specially designed for this pilgrimage. It is said that he has been photographed in one suit, in no less than forty different positions. This is an exhibition of modesty that could not be paralleled from the lives of mere Pagan rulers, such as Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius. Those benighted emperors did not understand the philosophy of the wardrobe. They labored under the heathen prejudice that their duty was to live simply and devote themselves to the welfare of their people. No doubt they would smile at William's photographs, but this only shows their backward and un-Christian state of moral cultivation.

There is, however, one touch of low comedy in this high imperial enterprise. William is to be taken round Palestine by Mr. Cook, and the great German Emperor will sink into a personally-conducted excursionist. Of course it is all for the best, but it is rather grotesque. We should have imagined that the Archangel Gabriel—the elegant personage who made that delicate announcement to Mary—would be proud to descend from heaven once more, in order to show Emperor William round the old haunts of the leaders of the first Salvation Army.

Egypt was to have been visited *en route*, but the opportune discovery was made of an Anarchist plot to assassinate Emperor William, who is thus relieved from the difficult task of comporting himself so as to avoid offending either England or France. No doubt the Anarchist plot was real, but perhaps there is more substance in the problem of Fashoda.

But the imperial pilgrim has not missed Constantinople. He has "done" the sights of that incomparably situated metropolis. He has seen what it is that Russia aspires to possess. He has been cheered by Turkish soldiers, who were probably paid a month's back salary for shouting. He has helped the Sultan to spend half a million of money. He has dined with "the Great Assassin." He has allowed his wife to go about arm-in-arm with "Abdul the Damned." He has exchanged cordial civilities—nay, fraternal greetings—with the man whose hands are red beyond all cleansing with Christian blood—red enough to incarnadine the multitudinous seas.

This is piety! This is diplomacy! This is Christian statesmanship! Emperor William forgets the poor Armenians. He has no thought for the men who were massacred, the wives who were outraged and then tortured to death, the girls who were polluted and left to bear their moral agony. What are these things in the great game of international politics? Germany stood aside cynically while England, France, Russia, and Italy took charge of the Cretan question. But the Turks at Candia made the fatal mistake of killing some English soldiers and sailors; which put Admiral Noel's back up, and in he went with his ultimatum and his watch in his hand—the finest sight in those parts for a long while; and, oh irony while William and Abdul were fraternising at Constantinople that English admiral was just settling the Cretan question, with the cordial co-operation of his brother salts of the three other fleets.

We rather like the good old sailor methods: ship-shape,

up to time, no damned nonsense. Had the four Admirals been given a free hand, they would have settled the Cretan question fifteen months ago. They didn't understand the tricks of diplomacy, but they had common sense, and they knew that the one indispensable thing to be done was to clear out the Turkish garrisons and disarm the whole population.

But let us get back to Emperor William at Constantinople, where we left him while we dashed off to Crete. We have not mentioned that the Empress visited the Sultan's harem, and was welcomed by the particular lady who is called the Sultana, the other ladies being discreetly ignored. William was not privileged to accompany her. Had he done so, he would probably have investigated the establishment more thoroughly, in order to see what comparison it bore to Solomon's—the wisest fool that ever lived, the gentleman who had seven hundred wives and (as Ingersoll says) three hundred other ladies he was acquainted with.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

CHRISTIANITY AND DEATH.

WE recently drew attention in these columns to certain facts in connection with the "Silence of the Tomb." It is now our intention to consider the Christian theory of the origin of death, which no doubt will be seen to be as fallacious as most of the other groundless speculations advanced by the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. The popular orthodox notion is, that death is the result of sin which was said to have been committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We are told that Adam was created immortal, and would have remained so, had he not transgressed the command of his Deity. This transgression, it is alleged, caused a fall from his original condition, and entailed upon him and his posterity mortality, and thereby introduced death into the world. As St. Paul puts it, "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (Romans v. 12). True, we are told in another part of the Bible: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezekiel xviii. 20). But this is only one of the many contradictions to be found in "God's word."

There are two serious objections to the Christian theory of the origin of death. In the first place, it is made to rest upon the supposition that Adam committed a sin in listening to the solicitation of Eve, and partaking of the forbidden fruit. If it can be shown that no sin was committed, as the Christians allege, then death could not have originated in the way orthodox believers describe. The Bible tells us that "sin is the transgression of the law"; but, at the time when it is said that Adam fell, what law was known to him? As the late Dr. Perfit aptly remarked: "The idea of sin involves the idea of knowledge being possessed by the sinner; knowledge, again, involves the ideas of both experience and reasoning, and these two, in their turn, involve the ideas of good and evil forces, as existing in the sinner's mind. Sin is, in all cases, a conscious violation of, and departure from, the known right; and where this knowledge of the right, this consciousness of wrong-doing, does not exist, then, unquestionably, there may be error; but there can be no active wrong, no sin to be punished. But we inquire, did Adam know the right? Is he anywhere said to have known it? How could he know, not having either any experience of his own, or that accumulated experience of other men which we now possess? The writer in Genesis expressly tells us that it was 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' of which they ate, and thus plainly sets forth that, before eating thereof, Adam knew not one from the other, knew not the good from the evil; how, then, could there be sin? Then, again, we are informed that, through eating thereof, his eyes were opened, and, consequently, that the knowledge of wrong-doing came not until after the action was performed; which plainly establishes that there was no sin."

Besides, we submit that no act can be rightfully regarded as being sinful if the actor is compelled to perform it through the force of circumstances, over which he

has no control. Now, in the Bible account of the origin of death through sin there were three circumstances forced upon Adam and Eve which, as events showed, they were powerless to resist. These were—the fruit that grew in the Garden, the desires which had been implanted within them, and the temptation of the serpent; these were arrangements in which Adam and Eve took no part. And to punish them and their posterity for that for which they were not responsible was manifestly unjust. Such cruelty and injustice should give the death-blow to any religion that teaches such a monstrous doctrine. And this, we must not forget, is one of the fundamental tenets of Christianity.

There are, however, other important difficulties involved in this theory of Adam being the cause of the introduction of death. Supposing life had been perpetual, could the world have contained its ever-increasing inhabitants? And would it have been capable of producing sufficient provisions to support such an immense multitude? Moreover, if the serpent had not played its "little game," could a man, who had no knowledge of swimming, have fallen into water, "out of his depth," without the possibility of his being drowned? Or could a person have remained in a fiery furnace and not be burned to death? Or if he were in a coal mine during what would be now called a fatal explosion, would he have escaped alive? The fact is, by our nature we must cease to live. Death is a necessity, in spite of what Adam did, or did not. Change is a universal law of existence, and we are no exception to that law. Death is the consequence of life, for all that lives must die. As Secularists, we do not repine at what we know must be the fate of all. We have this consolation—that if death cuts short our career, and sends us to rest with the multitudes who have gone before to the grave, yet it does not annul our lives, for what we have done remains, and cannot be undone. All our words and deeds have gone to form part of human history, from which they can never be taken. Regret cannot undo the evil we have done, or supply the least of our omissions. This thought should make us all sedulous in the practice of good and the avoidance of evil, while the days of our life last.

It has been demonstrated beyond the shadow of doubt that man lived and died ages before the alleged fall of Adam, whole races having previously flourished and passed away. No well-informed person will deny that, for thousands of years before the so-called creation of Adam, Egypt was the home of a race highly civilised. They passed away in very much the same manner as we die to-day. Death with them could not therefore have resulted from any act performed in the Garden of Eden centuries afterwards. Ought not this fact alone to prove the utter fallacy of the Christian notion of the origin of death? "There are, indeed, few persons of any education now," says an able writer, "who can doubt that at least the lower animals died long before man was created. Geology has brought to light their fossil remains entombed in the various rocks which go to make up the crust of the earth. They came into existence, played their brief part on life's stage, and passed away, not simply in individuals, but in whole races, long before the era dawned which gave man his birth. They preyed on one another then as now, the carnivora devouring the less ferocious tribes. Both together returned to the earth, their remains becoming preserved to tell their history to future generations. Race followed race in long succession, each to pass away as its predecessor had done, whilst as yet man had not made his appearance upon the scene. Nothing can be clearer than the fact that these animals were not immortal. This alone, one would imagine, would be sufficient to prove that man's sin could have had nothing to do with the death to which they were subject, seeing that they died ages before he appeared. Not so, however. There are always to be found persons who, to bolster up some whimsical fancy, endeavor to prove that black is white.

Reversing nature, will appoint new laws,
Cut off the effect from its connected cause."

It is to us surprising that persons possessing reasoning faculties should ever have been deluded by the palpable error that death is the result of the Garden of Eden episode. By some it is thought that the healthy human organisation presents no indications that its complex machinery was originally intended to be destroyed. We know nothing about the "original intention," but we have learnt by experience that, although the vital force is for a time

replenished, it ultimately decays, and its elements pass into other forms of existence. The *how* science has explained, but beyond that all "is silence." When the brilliancy of the sun disappears below the western horizon no indication is afforded that it will reappear in the morning. But experience prompts us to expect it. It is much the same with human existence. In the prime of life decay is not perceptible, but with the approach of the decrepitude of age the signs of dissolution are forced upon us. Like other forms of matter, that of man indicates unstability, and death is inevitable.

In the *Church Gazette* there has recently occurred an interesting discussion upon the Fall of Man as reported in Genesis. In our article next week we will deal with what is there said, so far as it bears upon the question of Christianity and death. In the meantime let it be remembered, in the words of Young :—

While man is growing, life is in decrease ;
And cradles rock us nearer to the tomb.
Our birth is nothing but our death begun.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

CLERICS IN COUNCIL.

WHEN I left Glasgow a fortnight ago, *en route* for Dundee, I observed an abnormally large number of clergymen among my fellow-travellers ; when I reached my destination I ran across two or three at every street corner, and, on coming down to breakfast at my hotel on the following morning, I found the smoking-room crowded by a full dozen of the same kidney, with myself the only layman among the lot. I began to fear that I was suffering from some sort of theological *delirium tremens*, or to wonder if I were really awake. The clouds of smoke arising from so many pipes and cigars, with a huge fire glowing in the grate, gave me the uneasy feeling that I had "shuffled off this mortal coil" in the night, and had actually reached the place to which so many Christians had consigned me—an impression still further strengthened by the number of parsons present.

A glance at the morning's paper solved the mystery. The Episcopal Church of Scotland was holding its annual conference in Dundee, and, with the assistance of the Bishops of Rochester and Bristol and Lord Hugh Cecil, discussing the old question of religious instruction in elementary schools.

It is curious, by-the-by, how seldom, hardly ever in fact, a congress of clergymen discuss the *improvement* of education. Their whole time and attention seem given to the solitary question of how existing educational machinery may be subordinated to their own use, or to the use of Christianity—generally two names for the same thing. Not that this is any new phenomenon in the educational world. Ever since the centre of education was shifted from the Church to the University the Christian clergy have represented a body of people animated by the single desire of safeguarding its own interests. Even the quarrels between Church and Chapel have not been quarrels for the advancement of education, but simply for its control. The rivalry of religious bodies in this direction practically began with the Reformation. The printing press in the hands of the reformers became a most powerful weapon against the older Church, and Rome, finding it impossible to suppress it, was compelled in self defence to utilise it in its own interests. In this the Church was powerfully aided by Ignatius Loyola and his followers. It was chiefly the Jesuits who taught Rome the absurdity of despising education and the absolute necessity of controlling it, and thus minimise its power to do harm.

There was not then, and there never has been since, any serious difference of opinion among Christian bodies as to the desirability of minimising general education as much as possible, or at least keeping the school under the control of the Church. The contest right through has been a struggle for the ecclesiastical direction of education, not for its improvement ; while the reforms that have resulted from the clashing of sectarian interests may be taken as a fresh illustration of the old maxim, "When rogues fall out honest men get their due."

But on the present occasion there was a delightful air of unanimity about the whole proceedings. No opposition

was allowed ; they were all agreed as to which form of religion was the best, and the only question at issue was how to get that into our public elementary schools. The problem, as the chairman, the Marquis of Lothian, pointed out, was not an easy one. We had fallen upon degenerate days ; the people no longer looked upon religion with the same favor as of yore ; and "there was a serious danger of religion being crowded out of the field altogether." This position of affairs was quite bewildering to the poor Marquis. He could not understand "why in this Christian country all the pressure should be put by School Boards upon secular education, which was only for the temporal benefit of those who had it, and they left out of sight altogether that which was for eternity." A little reflection might have shown his lordship that, if School Boards evinced a decided tendency to drop theology, it was not because its educational value had never been tested. On this point the argument from experience may be used with tremendous force. Theological instruction has been tried and found wanting, and if to-day it is being steadily driven off the field by its secular adversary, it is because experience has shown that, whatever benefits theology might confer on man in the next world, it does him precious little good in this, while the presence of a number of clergymen on boards of education is as anomalous as would be a number of large landowners on the committee of the Land Restoration League.

Of course, their reverend lordships of Rochester and Bristol were quite in agreement with the chairman upon this matter. With perfectly unconscious truthfulness the Bishop of Bristol declared that "in Scotland, as in England, it was a question of money," while he of Rochester, with charming frankness, asserted that "the system called voluntary schools came very near their ideal in the matter." We need not doubt *that* statement at least. No doubt a system that gives the Churches £4,000,000 per annum out of the public funds, and under which ninepence out of every shilling spent in so-called voluntary schools comes out of the public purse, while those who pay have no proper control over its expenditure, comes very near their ideal ; and it is equally beyond question that a system that paid the lot would realise their ideal altogether. The political injustice of teaching the religion of some with money raised from the taxation of all, or the ethical injustice of impressing upon children as demonstrably true beliefs that are, even to the most certain, open to question, and to others demonstrably false, never appears to have entered into their minds. It was not proposed to teach every religion in the schools, only the Christian, and that made a great difference—to the Bishops.

But the speech of the evening was undoubtedly that of Lord Hugh Cecil, who spoke last, and who has at least one of the characteristics of his father, that of blurting out unwelcome truths at the most inopportune moments. Definite religious instruction was necessary, said the Bishop of Bristol, because it made children grow up better men and women than they would otherwise become. Of course he meant more than that by the statement, and the commentary upon the text was made by Lord Cecil. Definite religious teaching was necessary, said he, because "under the system of undenominational teaching there was a tendency for the children after they left school to go elsewhere than to the church or chapel." That let the cat out of the bag with a vengeance, and we can imagine the dismay of the other speakers as this candid friend made it plain to the audience that all the pretended anxiety of the clergy to breed better men and women was merely a cloak for their real desire to secure clients for themselves or their church when the child reached maturity. And the best of it, or the worst of it, is, that it is quite true. Bring children up without forcing religious dogmas upon them, and, at the same time, equip them with a good secular education, and not one in a thousand nowadays would voluntarily adopt the Christian creed. We have long proclaimed this as being the case ; the clergy know it as well as we do ; Lord Hugh Cecil knows it as well as either, and said so. "Gentlemen of the black robe," he said in effect, "if you want to secure your church attendants, catch them while they are young. Impress their yielding minds with formulas that you yourselves do not understand, and usually do not believe, and at the same time seclude them from any information that has a tendency to shake their faith in the Christian creed. Do this, and by the time they go out into the world they will

be the possessors of a mind so deadened by prejudice, so warped by training, and so narcotised by religion, that unbelief will have little influence over them." Nor did the candid friend pause here. Religion was in a parlous condition all round. "If he dwelt on the importance of teaching children some new art or craft, wanting to make them physically and mentally better, the House of Commons would have cheered to the echo; but the souls of children might be left to take care of themselves." Moreover, the real danger, the speaker went on to point out, was not that the people of this country would become Roman Catholics, but that the growing indifference to religion should, in the course of a few generations, lead to its rejection altogether. This was the real danger the Churches had to fight against, and in this view of the case I heartily agree with him. For, when all is said and done, attacks upon rival religions, or even attacks upon special forms of heresy, are largely wasted efforts. It is the spirit of the age that Christianity has to conquer if it would itself live on. The great enemy of religious beliefs is not so much any special organisation that exists, or that may exist, as it is the process of thought itself. Men are killed by many diseases; religions die of but one—being found out. Thought is to religious beliefs what microbes are to human beings. Just as science has shown in one direction that man's greatest enemies are not the large and palpable, but those minute, organisms whose very existence was unknown until recently, so it has shown in another direction that the deadliest foe of religion is that impalpable but all-penetrating process of mental development that no amount of coercion can thoroughly suppress. Thought is, in brief, the microbe of religion. It is the greatest enemy that religion has to face, and therefore Lord Hugh Cecil was wise in his generation in pointing out as much to the assembled clerics. Once encourage man to exercise his reason fully and fearlessly, and the traversing of the distance from Rome to Rationalism is only a question of time. The one effectual method of keeping a man religious is to stop him thinking. And, therefore, I join with this scion of the house of Salisbury in advising the Churches, if they wish to keep people religious, to take care that they commence early. Do not trust your creed to adults who have grown up without it. Remember that Jesus warned you that only by becoming as ignorant and as credulous as children is it possible to enter the kingdom of heaven, and waylay the children who are too helpless to dispute your absurd claims, or to effectively doubt your outrageous stories. Continue to bar the child from scientific knowledge, and fill its mind with stories discredited by the best thought of the times: do this, and thy days shall be long upon the land which the ignorance and credulity of ages have enabled you to rule.

This is the real problem of the Churches—to control the operations of the human mind, or to sign its own death-warrant. But can it be done? Well, to say the least, it is highly doubtful. The Catholic Church has always understood the real enemy it had to face, and has made herculean efforts to accomplish the task, and failed. And where that Church, supported as it was by the public opinion of the day, failed, it is hardly likely that present religious organisations, fighting among themselves, distracted by doubt, and dealing with a public opinion partly rationalised, and wholly ashamed of being openly intolerant, will succeed.

C. COHEN.

SHELLEY'S PROSE WORKS.

NOT even the poorest can complain of the inaccessibility of good literature when Shelley's prose works can be bought for ninepence. How such a volume is produced at the nominal price of a shilling we confess ourselves unable to comprehend. The Camelot Classics, of which series it is an instalment, are a miracle of cheapness. Some of the best things by the very best English prose writers are now placed within the reach of the humblest reader. Surely this is a happy circumstance, and one of the compensations of "this mechanical age." Mr. Ruskin may deplore the fact that books may be purchased so cheaply, but there are few who will share his regret. There are even signs that this eccentric genius is relenting on this point, for some of his writings have recently been issued at a

price which, to people of moderate means, is not absolutely prohibitive.

Some critics may, of course, doubt the value of this particular volume, for in a sceptical age and a free country everything is liable to be challenged. Mr. Swinburne entertains the meanest opinion of Shelley's prose, his letters being only worthy of a clever school-girl, and his essays of little more importance. The only reason assigned for this judgment is that Shelley refused to believe that Shakespeare wrote a word of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Mr. Swinburne feels equally sure of the contrary, and he therefore denies that Shelley had the least sense of style. Such a verdict seems to us nothing less than grotesque. Landor, whom Mr. Swinburne justly venerates as one of the masters of English literature, formed a very different estimate. Writing of Shelley after his death, Landor assigned him the third place among the poets of his age, and described him as "incomparably the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose writers." Subsequently this panegyric was slightly altered, Shelley being given, "if not the highest, almost the highest, place among our poets of the present age," and ranked "among the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose writers." Shelley's admirers may pit Landor against Swinburne without fear or trembling.

Shelley's early political writings are only represented by extracts, and his *Necessity of Atheism* and *Refutation of Deism* are excluded on the ground that they are embodied in the notes to *Queen Mab*. Nor is a place found for the prefaces to his various poems, which can be read in their proper places elsewhere. It is a great pity, however, that the exquisite and matchless translation of the *Banquet* is omitted, with a promise of its inclusion in a volume of selections from Plato. On the other hand, the Letters seem complete; and on the whole, if the volume is not all that could be desired, it is still a precious possession to the Shelleyans who cannot afford the luxury of Mr. Buxton Forman's expensive edition.

The finest piece of Shelley's original prose is undoubtedly the *Defence of Poetry*, which, as James Thomson said, "with the enthusiasm and ornate beauty of an ode, preserves throughout the logical precision and directness of an elegant mathematical demonstration." For richness and chastity it would be hard to find its parallel in the whole range of our literature. Take this sentence: "No living poet ever arrived at the fulness of his fame; the jury which sits in judgment upon a poet, belonging, as he does, to all time, must be composed of his peers: it must be impaneled by Time from the selectest of the wise of many generations." With what accuracy and beauty is the relation of poetry to ethics expounded. Morality prescribes laws of conduct, but "poetry acts in another and diviner manner."

"The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb."

Perfect! It is the final word on this profound subject. And listen to this glorious burst of living music, following a reference to the Dark Ages of faith:—

"But mark how beautiful an order has sprung from the dust and blood of this fierce chaos! how the world, as from a resurrection, balancing itself on the golden wings of knowledge and of hope, has reassumed its yet unwearied flight into the heaven of time. Listen to the music, unheard by outward ears, which is as a ceaseless and invisible wind, nourishing its everlasting course with strength and swiftness."

Is there anything finer in the most famous passage of Milton's *Areopagitica*, which it suggests and rivals?

Mr. Matthew Arnold defines poetry as criticism of life. Shelley's definition is better: "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." The *happiest* in this definition must not be confused with

any exaltation of pleasure; it means fortunate, or favored; otherwise it would exclude all melancholy and sombre poetry, unless we rise to the full appreciation of Shelley's apothegm, that "the pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself." A paradox, yet a truth; and if it sounds strained and strange, it is because words cannot express the ineffable.

The conclusion of the *Defence of Poetry* is one of the grandest passages extant. Here are the last sentences:—

"Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is not moved, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

Precisely the same truth is expressed less loftily in the saying ascribed to Fletcher of Saltoun: "Let me make the people's songs, and I care not who makes their laws."

The brief essays on the Punishment of Death, on Life, and a Future State are pithy and beautifully written. Shelley declares it incredible that *mind* can be the *basis* of all things; for mind, so far as we know it, "cannot create; it can only perceive." Life and thought, he allows, differ from anything else, although science has considerably diminished this difference since Shelley wrote; but he rejects the idea that this dissimilarity affords a shadow of proof that life "survives that period, beyond which we have no proof of its existence," and "nothing but our own desires could have led us to conjecture or imagine" that it does so.

The fragmentary essay on Christianity contains some excellent points, but it is on the whole a failure. The state of biblical scholarship in Shelley's time was very greatly behind that of the present, and he seems to have been imperfectly acquainted with what was accessible. His method is very uncritical. He sees that the evangelists attribute to Christ "sentiments which flatly contradict each other," that they often "represent him as narrow, superstitious, and exquisitely vindictive and malicious," and that "they insert, in the midst of a strain of impassioned eloquence or sagest exhortations, a sentiment only remarkable for its naked and drivelling folly." To escape from this difficulty Shelley assumes, as Mr. Matthew Arnold does, that Jesus spoke over the heads of his reporters, whose ignorance and fanaticism are mingled with his wisdom and benignity. But, as Strauss argues, this process is arbitrary and impermissible. Our Gospels are not biographies of Jesus Christ, but undateable patchwork, made up of derivations from various sources. George Eliot justly remarked that the materials for a true portrait of Jesus Christ do not exist, and any attempt to paint one is a blunder. The result could only be a fancy portrait, like Shelley's and Mill's, achieved by idealising all the best features and omitting all the worst. Shelley's Essay on Christianity is replete with fine passages, but it is absolutely worthless as a disquisition on its subject.

Among the speculations on Metaphysics and Morals there are some subtle and striking thoughts. These are followed by other brief pieces, of which *The Age of Pericles* is the most important. It consists chiefly of observations on Greek sculpture. Each criticism is a model of eloquence, and any young writer who wishes to acquire a good style could not do better than learn them all by heart.

Of the Letters we have no room to speak at any length. They are certainly not as good as Byron's, but Shelley put all his thought into his poetry, while Byron put so little that he might well spare some for his correspondence. Besides, if the truth must be told, the best letter-writers are men of the world. Gray is perhaps an exception, but even his letters are only first-rate when he is travelling and gives a free rein to his fancy and his pen. Cowper may be cited as another exception, yet he also chats about things in general. Shelley's ordinary letters are of no interest except from a biographical point of view, while his best are too much in the manner of essays. Had he lived more in society as Byron did (of a sort), he would have been a more piquant and entertaining correspondent; but that would have been dearly purchased at the price of inferiority in his poems.

There are a few points in the Letters that will interest our readers. Writing to Thomas Hookham, the publisher, as early as December 17, 1812, Shelley says: "You will receive the *Biblical Extracts* in a day or two by the two-

penny post. I confide them to the care of a person going to London. Would not Daniel J. Eaton publish them? Could the question be asked him in any manner?" These *Biblical Extracts* were never published. They were probably a collection of contradictory, absurd, and immoral passages from Scripture. Daniel J. Eaton was pilloried and imprisoned for publishing Paine's *Age of Reason*. This outrage occasioned Shelley's *Letter to Lord Ellenborough*, which is a noble vindication of free speech, and a wonderful document from the pen of a youth of eighteen. It may be added that Shelley never limited his sympathy to words. His name appeared for five pounds among the subscribers to William Hone's testimonial, after his abortive trial for blasphemy; and in the Letters we read again and again of similar acts of generosity. On some occasions he has to borrow the money until his own remittances arrive.

Less than three months before his untimely death Shelley wrote to Horace Smith on the subject of Lord Byron and his religion. The date is Pisa, April 11, 1822. Moore had warned Byron against Shelley's influence in religious matters. Shelley took it in good part, for the sweetness of his nature was not easily soured, and with a strange humility he fancied that Moore's penny whistle was a superior musical instrument to his own organ. This is what he said on the subject:—

"I think you know more. Pray assure him that I have not the smallest influence over Lord Byron in this particular, and if I had, I certainly should employ it to eradicate from his great mind the delusions of Christianity, which, in spite of his reason, seem perpetually to recur, and to lay in ambush for the hours of sickness and distress. *Cain* was conceived many years ago, and begun before I saw him last year at Ravenna. How happy should I not be to attribute to myself, however indirectly, any participation in that immortal work! I differ from Moore in thinking Christianity useful to the world; no man of sense can think it true; and the alliance of the monstrous superstitions of the popular worship with the doctrines of the Theism of such a man as Moore turns to the profit of the former, and makes the latter the fountain of its own pollution."

Note the calm and modest courage of the writer, with what absolute sincerity he expresses himself, and how keenly he probes to the very bottom of the problem. Shelley never wavered in his rejection of Christianity, any more than in his lofty indifference to public opinion; and the words we have just quoted—so trenchant, yet so dignified—being written at the close of his last year of life, may stand as his final judgment on Christianity, and on those who countenance while disbelieving it.

Shelley's Letters also evince his warm love for political freedom. His "Declaration of Rights," based upon the American and the French, is still worth reading for its concentration and point. Of his Address to the Irish People only two extracts are given in Mr. Rhy's volume, but even if reprinted now, although it was the work of a mere lad, it would compare favorably with much that is written by politicians on the same subject. No doubt it was the political and social as well as the religious revolt that attracted Shelley in d'Holbach's *Système de la Nature*. He appears to have contemplated translating this work in 1813, and in a letter to Hookham he hints that he is "about" it; but probably he went no further than the passages in the notes to *Queen Mab*. When Leigh Hunt and Henry Hunt were imprisoned, in 1818, for the terrible crime of styling the Prince Regent a fat Adonis of fifty, Shelley burst into a passion of indignation. "Surely," he wrote, "the seal of abjectness and slavery is indelibly stamped upon the character of England." But, practical in his sympathy as ever, Shelley proposed a public subscription, offering twenty pounds himself. The Hunts, however, refused to accept any subscription, and paid the fine entirely out of their own pockets. Shelley befriended Leigh Hunt to the end, and it was owing to his exertions that the *Liberal* was started, and to Byron's slipperiness that it came to an untimely close.

When the Peterloo massacre occurred in 1819 Shelley wrote to Ollier: "The same day that your letter came, came the news of the Manchester work, and the torrent of my indignation has not yet done boiling in my veins. I wait anxiously to hear how the country will express its sense of this bloody, murderous oppression of its destroyers. 'Something must be done. What, yet I know not.'" The something was the *Masque of Anarchy*, which Hunt

shrank from printing till years afterwards, and in which Shelley shot another fiery arrow at old Lord Eldon, whose order in Chancery had deprived him of his two children.

A few of the Letters are addressed to Henry Reveley. Poets are considered to be entirely unpractical, yet it was Shelley who introduced steam navigation in the Mediterranean. Without any idea of profit, but simply to expedite communication, he conceived the idea of building a steam-boat to ply between Marseilles, Genoa, and Leghorn. Reveley was the engineer, the poet advancing him the necessary funds without security for the sake of so laudable an object.

From the Letters it is obvious that several things written by Shelley were never printed and are lost. For instance, the late Archdeacon Hare, in 1820, while admiring Shelley's genius, hoped he would in time humble his soul and "receive the spirit into him." Thereupon Shelley, writing to Ollier, said: "If you know him personally, pray ask him from me what he means by receiving the *spirit into me*; and (if really it is any good) how one is to get at it. I was immeasurably amused by the quotation from Schlegel about the way in which the popular faith is destroyed—first the Devil, then the Holy Ghost, then God the Father. I had written a Lucianic essay to prove the same thing." What a pity that Lucianic essay was destroyed. Shelley was not deficient in a certain refined wit, and such a document would probably have been a valued possession by the true Shelleys, who are all Freethinkers.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

THREE hundred and twenty-six years ago August 24 fell on a Sunday. Consecrated both to the Lord and his faithful apostle and martyr, Saint Bartholomew, the leading Catholics in France determined the day should have a triple sacredness by witnessing the extermination of God's enemies. That the deed was premeditated there is abundant evidence. Michelet, indeed, tells us that the bishops Sorbin and Vigor had preached it for a dozen years. We need not consider the various proportions of guilt to be assigned to Catherine de Medici, Charles IX., the Duke de Guise, Tavannes, Cardinal Lorraine, and the Jesuits. The spirit of Christian bigotry, the Christian doctrine that misbelievers were accursed of God, was at the bottom of this, as of so many other crimes of Christianity.

With consummate hypocrisy the Huguenot chiefs were lured to Paris to celebrate the nuptials of their leader, Henry of Navarre, with Margaret de Valois, the king's sister. Hopes arose that this union would end the religious feuds which had spilled much of the best blood of France. Coligny was invited to become leader of an expedition against Flanders, and, ready to show himself a Frenchman first and a Huguenot afterwards, the aged warrior was willing to join arms with the Catholics against the foreign foe.

At the dawn of this eventful Sabbath the streets of Paris were filled with armed men. All wore white crosses on their garments. Many had images of the Virgin around their necks; for theirs was a work of religion. They first went to the house of Coligny, dragged him from bed, stabbed him, and threw him still alive into the street. Then the massacre began in earnest, similar scenes taking place at the marked houses of every Huguenot. Men and women were indiscriminately murdered; children were torn from their mothers, and tossed on the points of spears. A contemporary historian, De Serres, gives the following account of these Sabbath devotions:—

"Behold, then, this great city, in which there were nearly sixty thousand men, armed with pistols, cutlasses, pikes, poignards, and other weapons, perambulating the streets, and sacking houses, in which they cruelly massacred all they met, without respect to age, sex, or condition. The streets were strewn with fragments of corpses, and the doors of the houses, palaces, and public edifices were stained with gore. A horrible tempest raged of yells, mingled with the report of pistols, arquebuses, and the pitiable shrieks of the victims. The bodies of the dead were hurled from the windows of their abodes, and dragged along the gutters, amid hissings and shrieks. The windows were smashed in with

hatchets and stones, the houses rifled. Carts traversed the streets, sometimes filled with rich booty, at others laden with mutilated bodies, which were flung into the Seine."

Blood inundated the streets, and flowed even within the royal palace of the Louvre, where the guards and friends of Henry de Navarre were massacred by the Swiss, drawn from the Catholic cantons where Protestants were executed. "Mass or massacre" were the terms offered to Henry and the Prince de Condé.* The king amused himself by standing at his window shooting the flying Huguenots. For the two succeeding days the slaughter continued in Paris, and for above a week it was followed in the provinces by the imprisonment, massacre, and pillage of the Huguenots. The number murdered has been variously estimated from twenty to one hundred thousand. De Thou, who puts the number of slain at thirty thousand, is probably the safest authority.

The news of this atrocity was received at Rome with unrestrained delight. A universal jubilee was proclaimed by the Pope; the guns of St. Angelo were fired, and bonfires lighted in the street. Gregory XIII. and his cardinals went in procession from sanctuary to sanctuary to give God thanks for this crowning mercy. In the Bodleian library may be seen a copy of the prayers used at this solemn thanksgiving. Over the entrance of the Church of St. Louis was placed an inscription:—

"To the most auspicious Pope Gregory XIII., to the sacred college of illustrious Cardinals, to the Senate and Roman people. Charles IX., the most Christian king, fired with zeal for the God of armies, like an exterminating angel divinely sent, having by a certain opportunity exterminated nearly all the heretical enemies in his state, in perpetual memory of this great blessing..... and foreseeing that this auspicious event.....portends and signifies a re-establishment of ecclesiastical matters.....renders grateful thanks to God in the Church of St. Louis....."

The subject was ordered to be painted as frescoes in the hall in which the Pope gave audience to ambassadors, and medals were struck at the papal mint to celebrate the pious deed. These were very rare, but the original dies have fallen into the possession of the Italian government, and fresh impressions have been taken.† On the one side is represented a head of the Pope, on the other an angel with a cross in one hand and a sword in the other, pursuing and slaying a band of flying heretics.

An attempt has been made to exonerate the head of Christendom on the ground that he was misled by report; but the medal must have taken sufficient time in preparing to enable Gregory to inquire into the matter. It remains a standing proof of the horrible and treacherous enormities to which Christian bigotry will resort.

ACID DROPS.

MR. HAROLD FREDERIC, the novelist, who died under the hands of the Christian Scientists, must have been far gone when he gave himself up to such impostors. No doubt his brain was affected by his malady. Judging from his most powerful novel, *Illumination*, he was one of the last men to succumb to this nonsense, unless his mental powers were enfeebled by disease.

The Christian Scientists who attended Mr. Harold Frederic, and settled him, had a deal of method in their madness. They took his money and prayed for him, and meanwhile allowed him to drink and smoke as much as he liked, which were the very things he ought to have avoided. But no doubt these indulgences kept him quiet and contented, and probably that was what the Christian Scientists desired.

We invite the *South London Mail* and the North London "infidel-slayer" called Woffendale to consider the case of the vicar of Ruyton and his precious wife, who are now spending a well-earned four months' holiday in gaol. The Rev. W. B. Gowan had a brother who died, leaving him £650 and the care of two little girls. The man of God and his pious helpmeet half starved these helpless orphans, so that they

* "La masse ou la morte!" are the words attributed to Charles IX.

† The medal, I believe, may be seen upon application to Mr. March, keeper of the French Protestant Church, St. Martin's le Grand.

actually robbed the pigs of potatoes. They were kept dirty, so that their clothes swarmed with vermin. They were beaten with all sorts of things, including walking-sticks, boots, and plates. Fortunately the intervention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children put an end to this horrible state of things, and the poor young victims are now free for ever from the cruelty of their parson-uncle and demoness-aunt.

Nothing could be worse than this case of cold-blooded, deliberate, persistent cruelty. The crime is not negative, but positive; it did not spring from mere weakness, but from a settled malignity. Many a man has swung from the gallows for a smaller crime in the eyes of reason and justice. And the worst of cruelty is that it is hopeless. You cannot reform a man or woman who delights in the sufferings of others. Their natures are devilish, and woe to any being who falls under their power!

We thank the unknown friend who sent us the *Shrewsbury Advertiser* containing a full report of the trial of the Gowans. From this journal we are happy to reproduce the statement that when the precious pair were sentenced to four months' hard labor each "the result was received with cheering by great crowds outside."

Rev. William A. Woods, of 7 Thanet-place, Strand, London, has been found guilty of immoral practices by an Ecclesiastical Court held at Coventry. Having a wife living, he consorted with another lady in a disreputable manner. The Bishop has to pronounce sentence. This is another present for Woffendale and the *South London Mail*.

When Mr. Foote was lecturing at Birmingham on "The Meaning of Death" someone handed him a letter signed by J. W. Mahony. This gentleman wrote that he had seen the announcement of Mr. Foote's lecture; he could not come to hear it, but he supposed Mr. Foote would say so and so; and, as a Spiritualist, he invited Mr. Foote to a public discussion on the subject. In the circumstances the letter was grotesque, and Mr. Foote paid it no attention. As a matter of fact, he receives dozens of such epistles every year. Of course he is not surprised to read in *Light* that he has declined to discuss Spiritualism with Mr. Mahony; indeed, that he dare not cross swords with this representative of Spiritualism.

Mr. Foote has not yet seen the man he is afraid of. Certainly he does not know of any reason why he should dread Mr. Mahony. But this is by the way. What is really important is this. How can an Atheist and a Spiritualist discuss when the one alleges as facts what the other regards as delusions? The alleged facts have got to be established as actual facts before their meaning can be profitably debated. Mr. Mahony should therefore satisfy a committee of investigators, including Atheists, that the phenomena of Spiritualism are objective realities, and not subjective impressions, or even the results of imposture. If he is willing to do this, Mr. Foote will be glad to assist in the formation of such a committee.

Canny John Kensit has been orating at Cheltenham, the platform being crowded with ministers and army officers. The orator announced that a letter just handed to him contained a five-pound note for his "God-given work." This was doubtless mentioned *pour encourager les autres*. Letters of that kind cheer canny John on the dreary road to—wherever he is going.

Some pious idiot spends a penny in attempting to save us from the wrath to come. Here is an exact copy of the elegant epistle he sends us: "Eternity!—Where will you spend it?—God is Love." Well, if God is Love, we don't see that there is any particular reason to be alarmed. Anyhow, we hope the boss will find us a seat a good way off the pious idiots who pestered us on earth.

"I have sinned against the Holy Ghost and am lost for ever!" This was the exclamation of Mary Jane Kirkham, a schoolmistress at Birdbrook, when brought round by the doctor after attempting suicide. So much for the religion of consolation.

We have always said that the dear, good Nonconformists only air their peace principles when England has nothing to gain by fighting. Mr. Leonard Courtney, M.P., addressing his constituents at Bodmin, drew attention to a recent aspect of this phenomenon. We quote from the *Daily News* report: "He never saw a more terrible revelation of the lengths to which the national temper could be betrayed than the words of a dominican priest a few months ago, when, in awarding the prizes at a military school, he glorified war as the highest virtue of a nation. He read those words with horror. But since then they had had revelations on this side of the Channel of Christian

ministers unconscious of the inconsistency of their position when they received with joy the invitation of the Czar, and coupled with it a clenching of the fists against France, as did Dr. Goodrich and Dr. Guinness Rogers and others who, at the Congregational Union, were led into much the same declaration as the French priest."

"Heavy Gales at Sea—Many Wrecks—Great Loss of Life." Such are the headlines in the newspapers of late. Does it not prove, in the words of the late Mr. Gladstone, how beautifully Providence has fitted the world for man's habitation?

"Providence" has visited Malta with a terrific storm, accompanied with hailstones weighing a quarter of a pound, inflicting enormous damage on property. Malta is a pious island, and we daresay its inhabitants are duly grateful for this divine favor.

Disastrous floods have occurred at Fiume. Large numbers of animals have perished, and the damage is estimated at over two million florins. More mercies!

The story is going the round of a Welsh minister who preached a taking sermon on "Go to the ant, thou sluggard." Returning home, he suffered from a plague of ants in the train. They settled in his trousers, and a station-master had to supply him with another pair before he could emerge from his compartment with a presentable appearance. One newspaper, in a leaderette on the subject, says that his congregation ought to present him with a Breeches Bible.

We thought the Passmore Edwards Settlement in Tavistock-place, London, was to be absolutely unsectarian—which, if it means anything at all, must mean secular. It seems, however, that we were mistaken. We notice the announcement of a "Jowett Lecture" by the Rev. R. H. Charles on "The Rise and Development of the Doctrine of a Future Life among the Jews."

There was a great outburst of ecclesiastical passion at the recent Lincoln Diocesan Conference. Dr. Foster, a clergyman, introduced a motion in favor of a more conciliatory attitude towards Nonconformists. Thereupon the fat was soon in the fire. One man of God declared that Nonconformists were simply full of abuse; another even asserted that all Protestantism was unscriptural; while a third affirmed that "the proper treatment for Nonconformists was that which God instructed his Prophet to adopt towards Jeroboam, who 'made Israel to sin!'" This reverend gentleman "deprecated human expedients and charity." Evidently he is in favor of root-and-branch extirpation. How they love one another!

We regret to see that Frederick Browne, artist and Anarchist, of Ashington, Essex, has got into trouble again through his postcard mania. This time he is sentenced to nine months' hard labor. His mind appears to be unhinged, and recovery is rather hopeless while he remains in that locality.

Dr. Martineau is so old a man that the unveiling of his statue at Manchester New College, Oxford, is almost a historical celebration. No one can deny that he is a towering figure in the religious world. From the Freethought point of view, there is considerable value in his criticism of what is rather facetiously called Christian Evidences. The *Daily News* remarks that he "accepts in their fullest extent the results of modern criticism upon the date and authenticity of the Gospels," nevertheless he has "always maintained that the moral system they embody was, and must remain, unimpaired by the process"—which, by the way, is remarkably like a platitude. But the best thing in the *Daily News* article is this. The "imperishable portion" of Dr. Martineau's theology, it tells us, is that "religion is shown to be true by acting as though it were so." What is this at bottom but saying that any fixed idea will find plenty of corroboration?

The title of an address delivered by Professor J. Estlen Carpenter in connection with the unveiling of Dr. Martineau's statue is curiously significant—"The Education of the Religious Imagination." It would be a pity to spoil this with any comment.

Dean Lefroy, of Norwich—the gentleman who got up a Self-Denial Week for the whole diocese and realised the sum of £30—has been improving the occasion of the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers. Preaching a special sermon in the Cathedral, he attributed all the modern progress of women to the influence of Jesus Christ. This is wild enough, but it was nothing to what the preacher said about the condition of women before the birth of Christ. "Before that era," he said, "they lived for merely animal purposes, and when the vilest uses had been served the despised creatures were cast aside like a sucked lemon skin."

Such lies as these can only be told in the coward's castle of the pulpit, where no falsehood can be contradicted, and no imbecility can be exposed. Homer's Andromache and the Mother of the Gracchi, to go no farther, are a sufficient refutation of Dean Lefroy's "Christian" history.

And what of Portia, the wife of Brutus, whose speech to her husband, soliciting his confidence, is recorded by Plutarch, and beautifully rendered into immortal verse by Shakespeare? Does she not tell him that if she only shares his bed and board, and does not share the secrets of his mind, she is his harlot, not his wife? And does not Brutus reply like the "noblest Roman of them all":--

You are my true and honorable wife,
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit this sad heart.

Sucked lemon skin! Really, it is too ridiculous. The story is not even *ben trovato*.

Going down to Portsmouth, a *Westminster Gazette* man got into talk about possible war with various sailors and soldiers. One old pensioner put the following view of the matter. "For myself," he said, "I don't want no wars; I've had enough of them. Still, I suppose God Almighty has ordered them, and if they does nothing else they helps to get rid of the surplus population, and that lets somebody else eat the bread and cheese of them as is dead." This is very good theology, though very bad humanity. Besides, those who get killed in war are not generally the most useless. They are not the cripples and the diseased, but the physical flower of the young male population.

W. H. Smith and Son continue their boycott of books that do not satisfy the press censor they keep somewhere in their Strand establishment. They are now boycotting Mr. T. M. Ellis's novel, entitled *God is Love*. A long letter of protest from the author is printed in the *Newsagents' Chronicle*. The Smith firm control a huge monopoly, and it is simply intolerable that they should dictate what books the British public should be allowed to buy at railway bookstalls, for instance, which should be open to every class of decent literature. We should hardly include the Bible in that category, though Smith's people think it the Word of God.

The Very Rev. Principal Story regrets that Glasgow University has no chapel of its own, and no connection with any place of worship. "In the great institution," he says, "which seeks to train and teach in all departments of human knowledge, the voice of religious instruction and exhortation is silent." How sad! Some men of God are defrauded of well-paid jobs.

There are naturally a good many Freethinkers in the medical profession, but of course the great majority of its members cannot afford to quarrel with the clergy. We are not astonished, therefore, to learn that a thousand doctors recently attended at St. Paul's Cathedral to hear a special sermon by the Bishop of London, under the auspices of the Guild of St. Luke the Physician. The Bishop's sermon displayed what Dr. Johnson called the intrepidity of ignorance. His lordship said that science, which once mocked at the resurrection of the body, was now in favor of that doctrine. We believe this will be fresh news to the great majority of scientists. We do not, of course, deny that a "great biologist" said that if there was a resurrection it must be the resurrection of the body; for he probably meant that there was nothing else to be resurrected.

Mr. W. Hardaker, a veteran Freethinker, writes to us as follows: "I was summoned to attend a Coroner's inquest at Saint Bartholomew's Hospital this morning, and, on stating to the Coroner that I preferred to affirm, he began to dictate words of affirmation until he came to words which he used, 'truly observe the oath.' When I objected that those words were not in the prescribed form, I was told not to dictate to him, and to take a seat at the back. At the end of the inquest I requested respectfully that the Coroner should refer to the Evidence Amendment Act for the form, and upon that I was insulted, and he directed the constable to summon 'this man' on the next inquest."

It is very clear that Mr. Hardaker was treated illegally as well as insolently. The coroner could not order him to remain in court after the jury was sworn; at least Mr. Hardaker was under no obligation to obey the order, unless he was wanted as a witness. It was also dead against the law for the coroner to single out any person to serve on the "next jury." We strongly advise Mr. Hardaker to write to the London County Council.

Two Roman Catholic parents, announcing the death of their daughter in the *Liverpool Echo*, beg all who read it to say one "Hail Mary" for the repose of her soul. It is a touching appeal, and perhaps, after all, the belief that underlies it is better than the hard Protestant doctrine of

everlasting hell (if you miss heaven) directly you are dead. Purgatory gives another chance. But, alas, on this chance the Catholic Church has erected the most profitable branch of its business.

We have received the annual balance-sheet of the Bristol Public Hall Company, which owns and controls St. James's Hall, in Cumberland-street. It is a melancholy document. The loss on the year is £116 4s. 9d., and this sort of thing has been going on for many years. We have said before, and we repeat it now, that if the Directors must lose money they may as well lose it on principle. Most of those who took shares in this scheme believed that the Hall would be used for Freethought propaganda and organisation; and it seems to us that some good at least would be done if the Bristol Secularists were allowed to utilise the building, if only for a twelvemonth, to see what would come of the experiment.

Anything to *bring* them in, now it is impossible to *compel* them to come in. The Rev. F. C. Kilner, vicar of Bingley, has started an Athletic Club in connection with the parish church Sunday-school. The members of the Club flocked there on Sunday last, and spent the rainy day in playing cards and bagatelle, swinging Indian clubs, and practising jumping. This is all very well in its way. But would the vicar of Bingley vote for the opening of public libraries, museums, and art galleries on Sundays? Would he not feel that there is more danger to the Church in that direction?

Our readers will remember the case of the famous pianist, Martinus Sieveking, who was lately arrested in Austria for "insulting" a priest by not taking off his hat to that worthy. Perhaps it was fortunate that the pianist did not strike the man of God, for he might have sent him to kingdom-come. It appears that he is one of Sandow's most boasted pupils. He was very weak physically when Sandow took him in hand, but within a year he became "the most redoubtable amateur I have ever met." Thus writes Sandow himself in his book on *Strength, and How to Obtain It*.

St. Michael's Church, Burton Wood, Liverpool, which has lately been the centre of Ritualistic squabbles, has had its Thanksgiving Sunday. On the back of the program for this great occasion is printed a list of things which the parson would like to have given him—such as an alabaster pulpit, a carved oak lectern, and an alms box. It is not stated whether the last article should be strong or flimsy. At the bottom of this list is the following notice:—"A New Church is now imperative. The present Church has been condemned." We suppose this refers to the building, but it will apply to the whole Establishment. Yes, the Church is condemned, but we *don't* want a new one.

The Lord Chief Justice of England, in responding to the toast of the guests at the dinner to Sir A. MacDonald, told an anecdote which is worthy of a permanent record, related to him by Mr. Russell Lowell. A friend, in paying Mr. Russell Lowell a visit, expressed himself in terms of unqualified condemnation of the Irish in America, who gave a solid vote against his candidature for the United States Presidency. The conversation then took a more general turn, and on Mr. Russell Lowell asking this gentleman where he intended to spend his holidays he immediately said in Ireland. "In Ireland!" said Mr. Russell Lowell, in astonishment; "in Ireland, whose people you have been so lavishly abusing!" "Yes," was the cool reply; "I wish to see Ireland, for it is the only English-speaking country on the face of the earth which is not ruled by Irishmen."

In *Collections and Recollections*, by Mr. W. E. Russell, M.P., the Master of Balliol, Jowett, comes in for a share of notice. Here is an extract: "At dinner at Balliol the Master's guests were discussing the careers of two Balliol men, the one of whom had just been made a judge and the other a bishop. 'Oh,' said Henry Smith, 'I think the bishop is the greater man. A judge at the most can only say, "You be hanged," but a bishop can say, "You be d—d." 'Yes,' characteristically twittered the Master, 'but if the Judge says, "You be hanged," you are hanged.'

"What weapon did Samson use in slaying the Philistines?" asked the Sunday-school superintendent during the general exercises. "He—he didn't use none," sputtered a little red-headed urchin on the back row of seats. "He didn't git inter de scrap till dey was all sunk."

"Papa, what does that mean about that man being gathered to his fathers?" "Why, my son, that means that he went to heaven." "And are his mothers all in the other place?"

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 30, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "What is the Matter with France? A Freethinker's View of Her Malady and its Only Cure."

November 6, Manchester. 13, Chester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 6, Wigan; 13, Camberwell; 20, Hall of Science, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

A. HURCUM.—Your indignation is natural, but the man of God referred to does not deserve to occupy any more of our space at present.

H. W. JONES.—Thanks. A good many more South Lancashire friends ought to join the Secular Society, Limited.

R. LAWSON.—We are obliged to you for your good wishes, which you help to realise by your subscription. It would be a good thing if all our well-wishers were to translate their sentiments in the same fashion.

HORACE W. PARSONS.—There are no shares in the Secular Society, Limited. Membership, with full voting power, is financially covered by the entrance fee of 10s. and subsequent annual subscription of 5s. The liability of members is strictly limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up, and the assets are insufficient to meet liabilities.

J. ROBINSON, joining the Secular Society, Limited, hopes it "will be as it deserves, a huge success."

RAMSGATE FRIEND.—Thanks for your letter and enclosure.

A. MILLAR, subscribing to Shilling Month, says: "If all your readers do likewise, the fund will assume formidable dimensions." Why, yes.

JOSEPH SEDDON.—Mr. Foote has not written, though he has lectured, on the Religion of Shakespeare. You may find something useful to your purpose in his article on "Hamlet's Last Words" in the *Secular Almanack* for 1897.

G. W. BLYTHE.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. PERCY WARD has changed his address, which is now 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. Branch secretaries and others interested will please note.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—Kindly send us your present address, as you will need to see a proof of the article you have just sent us.

H. BARRATT.—Miss Vance has handed us your application (with 10s.) for membership in the Secular Society, Limited.

J. FISH.—Subjects forwarded.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Our thanks to the Birmingham friends. Glad to hear that your Branch has just enrolled seven new members. Mr. Foote hopes to offer you another date very shortly.

P. SABINE.—See "Sugar Plums."

JOHN SANDERSON.—Thanks. It is useful.

OLD FREETHINKER.—We have pressed the matter sufficiently. Those who do not care to help must keep their money in their pockets. That is all. We shall continue to do our best.

SHAKESPEARE STUDENT.—The best edition of the so-called "Doubtful Plays" of Shakespeare is the one by Henry Tyrrell. Some of them are very decidedly *not* doubtful. Shakespeare wrote just as much of them as we did.

C. HEATON.—The publications you inquire after are not now procurable; at least not openly. The judges held that it was "obscene" to print samples in English from Catholic manuals of Confession.

JAMES LONDON.—We must agree to differ, at least at present. All the same, we quite appreciate the trouble you have taken to persuade us.

H. THORP.—M. Jules Bailly, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, London, W., will be pleased to give you good lessons in French at a moderate charge. Glad to hear you so enjoyed Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday evening. Subscriptions for the Circulation Fund should be sent direct to us, at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

H. C. LONG.—Never mind him; our party has won all along the line, and we can afford to smile at his antics.

W. G. ALLAN.—Possibly we overlooked it. The matter shall be seen to, and yourself advised.

F. TERRY hopes that hundreds, like himself, will send their mite to our Circulation Fund.

R. CHAPMAN.—Thanks. See acknowledgments. Kindly let us know when there is a prospect of obtaining a hall for lectures at South Shields.

TIN GEE-GE.—Have completed address on envelope for you. We intend to introduce some new features in the *Freethinker* when the next volume begins in January.

WILL our American exchanges please note that our address is, and long has been, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.? Some of them still direct to an old address of ours, and the post office naturally kicks against constant re-addressing.

RECEIVED.—Cheltenham Free Press—Ethical World—Liberator—Book Reviews—Torch of Reason—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—People's Newspaper—Sydney Bulletin—Cork Constitution—Free Society—Newsagents' Chronicle—Shrewsbury Advertiser—Southern Echo—New Century.

W. GIBB.—We will deal with Father King next week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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'S lecture on "Emperor William at Jerusalem" drew a crowded audience to the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. There was much applause and more laughter. Mr. Thurlow occupied the chair. This evening (Oct. 30) Mr. Foote delivers his third—and, for the present, last—lecture from the Athenæum Hall platform. He will take for his subject, "What is the Matter with France? A Freethinker's View of Her Malady and its Only Cure." This is a vastly important subject, and no doubt the audience will fill the hall to overflowing.

The first General Members' Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, had to be postponed on account of the hot weather and other causes. It is now fixed to take place on Friday, November 18, at the Manchester Hotel, Aldersgate-street, London, E.C. Formal notices will be sent out to all members in due course. Meanwhile, they can make a note of the place and date. We hope every member in London, and even some in the provinces, will make a point of attending.

The *Secular Almanack* is nearing completion, and will be fully advertised in our next issue. Orders should be forwarded to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The writer of "Our Handbook" in last week's *Referee* alludes to Jesus Christ as "having only a narrow outlook in a remote corner of the Roman Empire," and as therefore "failing to promulgate a system of ethics capable of universal application." The writer says that "to call upon the Churches to revert to the strict principles of the New Testament would be to ask them to put up the shutters." This has been said times out of number in Freethought journals. We are glad to see it conveyed through the *Referee* to a larger circle of readers.

The *Lincoln Leader* prints a strong letter by "G. F." against the setting of a class of young girls to write an essay on the battle of Omdurman. The letter concludes as follows:—"So far our educational affairs have been chiefly managed by the clergy and their supporters; and they professedly base their moral teaching on the Bible. If this apotheosis of the hired fighter be a sample of their method, we may fairly assume that the evolution of the virago is the desired end. We shall hear next of the canonisation of Jael, and that her day is held as chief festival in the school calendar."

The Birmingham Branch sends us its annual report and balance-sheet, the latter being a healthy document showing a considerable sum in hand, chiefly due to a present from Miss Alice M. Baker, in memory of her father, the late Daniel Baker. According to the report, the Sunday lectures in the Bristol-street Board-school have carried the propaganda of Secularism more widely than hitherto. Note is also made of the large and gratifying sale of Freethought literature.

Mr. J. M. Robertson lectured to a large audience at Camberwell on Sunday evening. In the afternoon Mr. Stanley Jones addressed a large gathering on Peckham Rye. So far from being driven off the Rye by the bigots, the Camberwell Branch intends to prolong the season and continue the Rye meetings until the end of November, if the weather is at all favourable.

One result of the opposition to Secularism at Peckham Rye will probably be the formation of a strong Peckham

Branch of the National Secular Society. A meeting for this purpose will be held at Winchester Hall, 33, Peckham-road, on Wednesday, November 2, at eight o'clock. Local Free-thinkers who may be unable to attend this meeting, and yet willing to join, should communicate with Mr. P. Sabine, 38 Waveney-avenue, Peckham Rye. Mr. Foote will be happy to start the new Branch with a free indoor lecture.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

(Company Limited by Guarantee.)

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

- 1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.
- 2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.
- 3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are :—
 - (a) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.
 - (b) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.
 - (c) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.
 - (d) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.
 - (e) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.
 - (f) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.
 - (g) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.
 - (h) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.
 - (i) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.
 - (j) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.
 - (k) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.
 - (l) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.
 - (m) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.
 - (n) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.
 - (o) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets are insufficient to cover liabilities.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

SHILLING MONTH.

FOR THE "FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.

[Where no figure accompanies the name the amount acknowledged is one shilling.]

P. Cassidy, W. Cromach 2s., H. W. Jones 2s. 6d., R. Lawson 2s., L. C. Zeitter 2s., A. Hurcum 2s. 6d., Horace W. Parsons 10s., J. Robinson 2s., J. L. K. and Wife 2s., A. Friend 2s., W. J. Thompson, A. Millar, W. Fleming 2s. 6d., H. Barratt 10s., J. Baker, W. 2s., J. T. Ives, R. M. Brownlow, J. Terry 2s., A. G. Lye, J. P. 2s., F. Terry, G. White, S. M. Peacock, B. Eglintine, J. Fothergill, Tin Gee Gee 2s. 6d., R. Richards 5s., A. E. Elderkin 2s.

THE FOES OF FREEDOM.

"If any one say : Let us serve other gods, *Thou shalt surely kill him.*"—OLD TESTAMENT.

"If any one preach any other Gospel, *let him be accursed.*"—NEW TESTAMENT.

THE Christians oppose,
While feigning to teach,
What everyone knows
As "Freedom of Speech."

Their "Freedom of Speech"
Means : free to say "Yea !"
To all that they teach,
But not to say "Nay !"

When weak, they advise ;
When strong, they compel
With jails, and with lies
Of heaven and of hell.

Of speaking, beware ;
Unless they allow
The "when" and the "where,"
The "what" and the "how."

You're free to uphold
No more, and no less,
Than what you are told
By them to express.

They're free as the sea
To roar and to scum,
While *thinkers* are free
To think—and be dumb.

The noodle who "knows"
That God is his light
Will always oppose
The heretic's right.

Jehovah declared
That sceptics he'd slay ;
His friends, if they dared,
Would do it to-day.

Whom God will destroy
The Christian detests,
And makes it his joy
To treat them as pests.

The sceptics are fair
To those they oppose ;
But Christians *must ne'er*
Be fair to their foes.

Of non-Christian rites
The Christians make sport ;
But woe to the wights
That dare to retort !

The right to *agree*
In slavery rose ;
Men never are free
Till free to *oppose*.

Jehovah and son—
Who've fought Freedom most—
Say : "Think all as one,
Or, damn you ! you'll roast !"

We *cannot*—not *won't*—
And, though it be true
We're damned if we *don't*,
We're damned if we *do* !

Who claims unfettered right to speak,
Nor grants to all the same,
Proclaims himself a knave and sneak—
The Christian makes this claim.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Obituary.

I REGRET to announce the death of Captain Charles G. Cross, who died somewhat suddenly on Friday, October 21, from peritonitis. Deceased, who was particularly well-known to the frequenters of Hyde Park, was buried at Finchley Cemetery on Monday last, a number of his Free-thought friends being present. Mr. G. W. Foote attended out of compliment to the family, and Mr. Charles Watts read the Secular Burial Service.—E. M. VANCE.

ORTHODOX HYMNOLOGY.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in his *Literature and Dogma*, writes in just reprobation of what he calls the "doggrel" so frequently sung in Christian churches. He says that God is displeased and dissevered by it—which is not at all unlikely if he is a God of any taste, or if he is impressed in any way at all by anything that can be said or sung about him. Mr. Arnold indicates the kind of "doggrel" he has in his mind by such examples as:—

Sing glory, glory, glory to the great God Triune.

Out of my stoney griefs Bethels I'll raise.

My Jesus to know *and feel his blood flow,*
'Tis life everlasting; 'tis Heaven below.

These specimens, it is true, are not indicative of the highest and purest spiritual feeling, or of much refinement, on the part of those who wrote or those who sing them. Yet, as we know, they are but mildly offensive to the cultured human taste in comparison with many examples that Mr. Arnold might easily have found. One's earliest recollections are associated with a number of charming compositions of the kind, full of sanguinary and cannibal-like sentiments. In later years Revivalists and Salvationists have added largely to the store.

As regards the earlier productions, who does not remember being hymnally told in his Sunday-school days of a remarkable "fountain filled with blood" drawn from somebody's veins; the juvenile attention being further arrested by the singular fact that people who plunged beneath that flood came out without any stains. Another hymn calmly assured the wondering juvenile that this bath of blood would wash him "white as snow," which seemed difficult of comprehension when he went on a week-day and looked at the butcher's shop round the corner. The lambs exhibited there displayed no such extraordinary powers as the one sung of in the Sunday school, and the blood didn't look like washing him clean.

These poems of the shambles—these lyrics of "raw-head-and-bloody-bones" theology, sad though it be, seem as much in vogue now as ever they were, and naturally they constitute one of the many causes of repulsion to the Christian faith.

Looking over the hymns used at the late Church Congress—which hymns may be supposed to have been carefully selected—it does not appear that there has been any advance in the direction of refined and rational sentiment. One or two might be used at an Obeah incantation. The captive King of Benin—who, as we have learned, is now a Presbyterian—could sing them with infinite gusto and glee. If, in the unregenerate days before he "found Christ," his taste did not exactly tend towards the consumption of his own human sacrificial lambs, he would still be glad to know from Congress Hymn No. 5 that the Christian Church he has joined "partakes one Holy food." It is euphemistically put in this particular hymn. Fully and unreservedly explained in accordance with the naked and orthodox doctrine, the sentiment would naturally commend itself—apparently it has—to that new and distinguished convert. This, and the gloating allusion to the "blood" wherewith Christ bought the Church, should also ensure respectful consideration from any of the ex-King's followers that can be found.

Leaving this repulsive aspect of orthodox hymnology, we may note that the Congress hymns contain not a few touches of unconscious humor. For instance, at the very commencement of the collection—in the first verse of hymn one, there is a comical apostrophe which really looks as if the Congress proposed to treat Christ as an "illiterate." He is asked to bless the day, and

Lest it prove a time of loss
Mark it, Savior, with Thy cross.

A most absurd line, whatever the meaning was intended to be. It might be suggested by some that, after all, it would not be unscriptural to regard Christ as illiterate, seeing that, though he came with a Gospel, there is no suggestion that he ever wrote a line. Against this we have the record that on one occasion he did write something on the ground, presumably, perhaps prophetically, in sand.

The rude importunity of the first line of the last verse of this hymn must be to Freethinkers amazing, and to thoughtful Christians not a little displeasing:—

Hear us, Lord, *and that right soon,*
Hear and grant the choicest boon.

"And that right soon"—which is as much as to imperatively say: "Hurry up, Lord, we can't wait"—as if the Governor of the Universe had nothing else to do but to listen to a comparative handful of mites collected on an almost imperceptible spot which they called Bradford, and where they seemed pressed for time.

An impertinent kind of condescension pervades the line in Hymn 18: "Then let us adore, *and give him his right.*" How very kind and good of these Christians to thus recognise, voluntarily and without reserve, the claims of their Maker. With a noble magnanimity, which is beyond admiration, they propose to give him his right as they give the Devil his due. There is no grudging spirit about this hymn. It proposes to deal fairly with the Deity, and even a god cannot expect more.

In Hymn 13 there is a supplication: "Scatter sin and unbelief"—a mendacious conjunction, which Freethinkers should note.

However, not to waste more time on these inane and often absurd compositions, we may briefly add that the major part of the hymns are devoted to the praise and glory of God—the same string being harped upon with wearisome monotony—as if God wanted all this adulation, and longed for it, and would be unhappy or angry if he didn't get it.

Turning to orthodox hymnology generally, it does seem really wonderful that intelligent persons can be induced to stand up and sing such nonsense rhymes—mere unmeaning jingles when not conveying something which is absurd or painfully repulsive. The real explanation is that scarcely anybody *thinks* whilst he sings in church or chapel. If he does think, it is not about the words, which are of no consequence, but about his own vocal performances—good, bad, or indifferent; or about the lady with whom he thumbs the same hymn-book. With the feminine section, it is mostly a question of "Mary Jane's Top Note," or a variety of other matters in which the observation of surrounding millinery is not the least. There is, of course, real devotional feeling wasted by many misguided people on these inane outpourings. As to the extent to which that real devotional feeling exists, the clergy may be permitted to offer their own estimates. They complain bitterly enough about its absence.

FRANCIS NEALE.

STEPHEN GIRARD.

STEPHEN GIRARD, the founder of Girard University, was a lover of children, and gave his wealth to his country. Very few men in history have united so many apparently contradictory qualities. He loved children passionately, and the sight of a crippled or miserable-looking urchin would bring tears to his eyes. His devotion to the United States never once faltered, and at every reverse during the war of 1812-15 he ground his teeth and, it is said, swore in his native French. At length he offered to dedicate his entire fortune to the war, lent the Government \$5,000,000, and asked no interest till the war closed. A rich man who loves children, and is willing to give all his wealth to his country, must have a great deal of good in him.

His bravery was of the morally sublime order. When the yellow fever scourged Philadelphia, and had driven away most of the nurses, he and Peter Helm worked two months in the hospital at the most menial offices and shamed the faint-hearted into bravery. An affliction in early childhood destroyed his right eye and distorted that side of his face, so the boys nicknamed him by a French word that might be translated "wall eye." He lost his mother when he was quite young and his father was harsh. In short, he was a miserable, lonely child, and fled from home to be a cabin boy at the age of ten.

The romance of his life came to him in Philadelphia, where he opened his first store. He loved and was beloved again. She was singularly beautiful and vivacious; he taciturn, disfigured, and eleven years her senior. For a few years they were happy; then she suddenly lost her health, soon became violently insane, and lived in that condition thirty years in the State asylum. Their only child died in infancy, and the sad old man finished his journey alone. His magnificent charities have preserved his name for all time. He was a Deist in religion, and named his ships after infidel authors.

—*Secular Thought.*

SUPERSTITION IN GERMANY.

EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF FRAUD.

A TRIAL which has just taken place at the Bavarian country town of Kempten, the centre of an almost purely Roman Catholic population, reveals the existence of such extraordinary ignorance and superstition that the details are worth noticing. A married couple at Kaufbeuern, Alois and Rosine Wohlfahrt, lived in extreme poverty, shared by the illegitimate daughter of the wife, a girl of eighteen, named Agnes, who suffered from an incurable disease. The family had lived for years on alms obtained by touching letters written by the invalid. In 1893 an old schoolfellow of the girl, Cecilia Kottrich, began to visit her; and, moved to pity by the poverty of the sick girl, prevailed upon her own parents, who are well-to-do farmers, to give their assistance. She was thenceforth allowed to take Agnes her dinner every day, and a mark or two every week for little extras. After some time Agnes confided to her young friend Cecilia that the Virgin Mary often appeared to her, and that she was in correspondence with her, and also with Crescence, Cecilia's sister, who had died a year previously, and who had also been their schoolfellow. Agnes whispered the secret that Crescence was not in heaven, but in purgatory.

These mystic communications affected Cecilia's health, and she began to suffer from hysterical attacks. Agnes, no doubt inspired by her needy mother always on the look-out for crooked ways by which she could obtain money, proposed that, when the Virgin Mary next appeared to her, she would ask her to let her take Cecilia's sufferings upon herself. By the time Cecilia came again the Virgin had consented, but Cecilia's parents must make a sacrifice and pay two hundred marks. They did this willingly, and from that time forward during three years the "messages from Heaven" never ceased. The Virgin herself proposed that Crescence should be delivered from purgatory. Three hundred marks were all that was needed. Farmer Kottrich paid the sum. A little later the news came from heaven that Crescence had married an angel—she wished to have her dowry sent, and 1,000 marks for furnishing her new home. Then after a time came the news that Crescence, who was very happy, had given birth to a child. Would they send money for the wants of the baby? By this time Cecilia had no more attacks, and farmer Kottrich and his wife firmly believed it was "all right." Their youngest daughter, four year old Josepha, now also declared she could see the Virgin Mary on fine days when she was in the woods by herself. Agnes, or her mother for her, made more preposterous demands every day—the Kottrichs had to borrow loans and pay high interest for them. One day the Virgin Mary herself asked for the loan of 2,500 marks, promising to pay good interest, to decorate the heavenly rooms, erect new altars, etc.

At the trial the Kottriches produced fifty-two letters which Agnes had transmitted from heaven, and these were not all, some being lost. The letters which came from the Virgin Mary direct were written in Latin letters, those from Sister Crescence in German letters; every sheet of letter paper had the picture of a saint upon it. Those from the Virgin Mary had a gilt edge. Imagine the sensation in court when the Public Prosecutor read a receipt "from the Mother of Christ" for 150 marks; a request for a higher amount signed: "In heavenly glory. Joseph and Mary"; a letter expressing thanks for money received and for excellent potatoes; another announcing the receipt of 2,500 marks, signed "Daughter, son-in-law, and little baby," with the remark added, that when the money arrived "all the angels in heaven blew their trumpets." One letter expressed thanks for very good cheesecakes, and yet another for money and bed-linen. In one of the latest letters the Virgin Mary said that she would soon take away the old grandmother (who still had property of her own). When Agnes asked for 300 marks for those in heaven, and Cecilia doubted whether her parents had any more money to give, Agnes's mother, Rosine Wohlfahrt, who is the chief accused in this trial, said: "It is not so difficult to get money. They need only give the old grandmother wine, and put something in it." After this Farmer Kottrich's wife offered five pounds of wax candles as a sacrifice in church for the speedy death of the grandmother. The sums of 1,000, 1,600, and 2,500 marks were given into the hands of Agnes by the farmer and his wife, and numberless smaller sums by Cecilia and her brothers or little sister. Perhaps the most remarkable fact of all is that "Our Lady" and "Sister Crescence" sent their dear ones some things from Heaven, from "the heavenly hall"—a sofa, a large milk loaf, pieces of clothing, a silver watch, and a gold ring; but this last had to be returned after a short time. Frau Kottrich herself baked a fine tart for the Virgin Mary. When Agnes died in 1896 relations with the Kottriches ceased, and when the affair was talked about throughout the district the farmer, who sighed under the load of the debts he had incurred, declared he would have the sick girl's mother and step-father punished for having cheated him so long. The mother denied all know-

ledge of the affair, but she was found guilty, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Her husband, who is too stupid to have helped in the deceit, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for receiving stolen goods.
—Daily News.

BIBLE-READING IN SCHOOLS.

THE Bible-Reading in Schools Committee wish to introduce the Scripture Lesson-Book as used in the national education of Ireland. Just so. But what effect has it on those who use it? Let us see:—

NEW ZEALAND STATISTICS, PAGES 280-282, 1896.

Percentage in Colony of	Percentage of Criminals
Church of England... 40.27	41.74
Catholic 14.07	32.95
Presbyterian 23.78	17.15
Wesleyan 10.44	3.00
Others... .. 11.44	5.16
100-0	100-0

Analyse for yourselves; if I do, it will not be printed.

Percentage of people born in	Produce per cent. of crime
England and Wales... 16.89	28.05
Ireland 6.55	20.61
Scotland... .. 7.18	12.76
New Zealand 62.85	24.43
Australia 3.10	4.70
British Possessions... 0.53	1.44
China 0.53	0.52
Foreign 2.37	7.49
100-0	100-0

The users of that book do not come out very well. It affects the New Zealand born to some extent. Work out the percentages according to numbers. I have, but cannot print them.

INDIVIDUALS CONVICTED.

Born in	Belonging to
England, Wales ... 543	Church of England... 808
Ireland 399	Catholic 638
Scotland 247	Presbyterian... .. 330
New Zealand ... 473	Wesleyan 55
Australia 91	Others 100
China 10	Jews 5
British Possessions ... 28	
Others... .. 145	
1,936	1,936

The Chinese percentage is very low. They do not use that book.

TOTAL TIMES CONVICTED.

Born in	Belonging to
England, Wales ... 914	Church of England 1,501
Ireland 714	Catholic 1,061
Scotland 356	Presbyterian ... 506
European descent ... 801	Wesleyan 108
Maoris... .. 160	Protestant 141
Sundry 222	Jews 5
Foreign 211	Pagaus 11
China 14	Sundry 17
	No Religion 42
3,302	3,392

According to above results, that Irish Scripture Lesson-Book will not suit our schools. Get the Chinese Book.
COLONIAL BORN.

According to above, Catholics produce 32.95 per cent. of the criminals, three times as many as average of other superstitions. Considering their numbers in colony, if they were as moral as average of the rest, their number should have been 10.92. If as moral as Chinese, 6.42. Therefore criminals seem produced by superstitions, not secular education. Ireland produces 20.61 per cent. of the criminals. If the Irish were as moral as the others, considering their numbers, they would be 5.62 per cent. About one-fourth, say 6.12, of New Zealand born criminals must be added, according to above tables, as of Irish extraction, making 26.73 per cent. Not a good result from the land that uses that book in the schools.

—New Zealand Times.

The largest Bible in the world is the Buddhist Tripikata, or "three baskets," which comprises 325 volumes and weighs 1,625 pounds.

BOOK CHAT.

The Agnostic Annual for 1899 (London: Watts & Co.) is certainly a good sixpennyworth. Mr. F. J. Gould opens with an impassioned article on "Agnostics Yet Englishmen," in which he sings the praises of Dissent and claims that Agnostics are now the true Dissenters. Mr. G. J. Holyoake follows with a personal article on the late Mr. Gladstone, in whom, strange to say, he sees much resemblance to Voltaire. To us they are as like as Monmouth is to Macedon. Mr. Joseph McCabe writes well on "The Revival of Ritualism," and Mr. Charles Watts on "The Bible: Past, Present, and Future," which is a larger order than it is possible to execute in one article. Major Forlong contributes an interesting paper on "The Heaven Idea." Mr. Herbert Flowerdew asks, "What is the Harm of Christianity?" He finds a great deal of harm in it, especially in its hindrance to the growth of a sound and rational morality. Mr. C. T. Gorham writes on "Christian Infidelity," and Mr. Geoffrey Mortimer on "The Peril of Apathy," seeking to show that liberty of thought and speech is still in peril. Not the least suggestive article is the one by Mr. Furneaux Jordan on "The Evolution of the Direct Man." Other contributions by Mr. Thomas Whittaker, Mr. Amos Waters, and Mr. C. K. Tuckerman make up a capital number of this publication.

* * *

Most of these Agnostic writers are in a militant mood. Does this mean that the absurd superciliousness which used to characterise Agnosticism is disappearing under the pressure of experience?

* * *

Mr. Holyoake quotes from a book by "an unknown author," published by the Tonsons in 1756—from which Mr. Dobell lately printed some extracts. Perhaps our veteran friend will not mind our telling him that the unknown author was F. Greville. Mr. Holyoake likens him to Montaigne, but his resemblance is rather to the later French moralists, such as La Bruyère and La Rochefoucauld, whom he almost equals on their own ground. There are even suggestions in him of Vauvenargues.

* * *

Mr. John Morley is to write the Life of Mr. Gladstone. Even the religious part, it is said, will be written by the distinguished Positivist. We do not envy Mr. Morley that section of his task. He must have a pretty decided opinion, we should think, of the intellectual value of Mr. Gladstone's contributions to religious controversy.

* * *

The *Open Court* for October contains a good portrait of Pascal, and devotes much space to his religious philosophy and scientific achievements. Rev. George F. Candlin, a Christian missionary in Northern China, contributes a very interesting paper on Chinese Fiction. There is also a portrait and an appreciation of the late Professor John Caird, the latter written by Professor Wenley, of Michigan University.

* * *

Mr. Charles T. Gorham publishes, through Watts & Co., (1s.), a little volume on *Ethics of the Great Religions*. "The moral element," he says, "is that which gives religion its immense hold on the human heart." We are not quite so sure of this. However, the author is entitled to his opinion; and, acting upon it, he proceeds to give a careful, though necessarily brief, statement of the special ethics of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Mohammedanism. Readers who have not time to study the subject in detail for themselves will derive much profit from this book, which is written throughout in a candid, impartial spirit, and with adequate information.

* * *

Mrs. Ritchie continues to print interesting letters from Thackeray in the introduction to the new issue of his writings. One letter to his daughter, written in 1852, before he sailed for America, contains the following passage: "When I was of your age, I was accustomed to hear and read a great deal of the Evangelical (so-called) doctrine, and got an extreme distaste for that sort of composition—for Newton, for Scott, for the preachers I heard, and the prayer-meetings I attended. I have not looked into half-a-dozen books of the French modern reformed churchmen, but those I have seen are odious to me. D'Aubigné, I believe, is the best man of the modern French reformers; and a worse guide to historical truth (for one who has a reputation) I don't know. If M. Cossaint argues that because our Lord quoted the Hebrew Scriptures therefore the Scriptures are of direct Divine composition, you may make yourself quite easy: and the works of a reasoner who would maintain an argument so monstrous need not, I should think, occupy a great portion of your time. Our Lord not only quoted the Hebrew writings (drawing illustrations from everything familiar to the people among whom He taught, from their books, poetic and historic, from the

landscape round about, from the flowers, the children, and the beautiful works of God), but he contradicted the old Scriptures flatly; told the people that He brought them a new commandment—and that new commandment was not a complement, but a contradiction of the old—a repeal of a bad, unjust law in their statute books, which He would suffer to remain there no more."

ADVERTISING IN CHURCH.

JOE and Henry Bruton, the snuff men, were two of the best story tellers that ever lived, and many of their stories are yet told in Nashville and elsewhere, with due credit to their originators. One of the best I ever heard of in the nature of a personal experience of either was the narrative of the part Joe Bruton took in an experience once. In a town which he "made" he went to church, and the meeting was for the relation of personal experiences. Several spoke concerning their personal faults and the sorrow they felt, and finally someone called on "Brother Bruton" to give his "experience." Bruton rose, and began with a dissertation on the various forms taken by sin with different people. Some, he said, were affected with the sin of betting on horses, which was a great evil, and one which they should not indulge. Then there were others whose besetting sin was whisky, a most grievous sin. So he went on until he came to tobacco. He said that the besetting sin of using tobacco took many forms, of which the commonest and worst was chewing. This was not only unclean, but unhealthy, and should never be indulged in. Then there were some who smoked—another very bad habit. "In fact," he said, "if you are going to use tobacco at all, you should use it in the form of snuff, and when you do use snuff you should never use any but the — snuff" (naming the brand which he travelled for). And with this conclusion he took out a handful of circulars concerning the snuff and threw them up in the air, letting them fall all over the church.

—Nashville (Tenn.) Banner.

Herbert Spencer on Life.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, from his peaceful retirement at Brighton, has emerged into the arena of lofty speculation which was started by Professor Japp in his presidential address at the British Association on the nature of "Vitalism." We can hardly go into the abstruse problems of stereochemistry raised by this discussion, or argue the question between Pasteur and Professor Japp, whether the fact that living nature can produce single, asymmetric, optically active compounds, which are always double, symmetric, and optically inactive when produced in laboratories, has any bearing on the origin of life. Mr. Spencer says that the interpretations of life based on this question are wrong in either way. In the new enlarged edition of *Principles of Biology* he has added a chapter on "The Dynamical Element in Life," in which he contends that the theory of a "vital principle" fails, and that the theory of a "physico-chemical" origin also fails, the corollary being that in its ultimate nature life is incomprehensible. That Mr. Spencer should recognise a fixed limit to knowledge will strike many people as curious.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Lead, Kindly Light.

There were some curious coincidences at various places of worship on Sunday night in connection with the darkness which came over the district owing to the sudden failure of the gas. As already mentioned in the *Echo*, at St. Peter's Church the anthem was "Send out Thy light"; but the choir could not see the music or words, so they did not sing it. At St. Katherine's at Southborne, just before the extinction of the light, the congregation were singing, "Darkness now is drawing nigh." At the Primitive Methodist Church in Commercial-road the people had just sung the hymn, commencing "I'd rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light," when out went the gas, and darkness prevailed until a neighbor sent in a packet of candles. At Pokesdown Methodist Chapel the preacher was discoursing on "Now we see as through a glass darkly." He finished his sermon by candle-light. As the light died away in the Springbourne Wesleyan Chapel the preacher, touching on the prophecies of Isaiah, halted at the words "we want—" when a voice replied, "We want light." This considerably tickled the risibility of those present, and the laughter was brought up with a request by the preacher that brethren would remember they were in God's house.—*Southern Echo* (Bournemouth).

A paper in Alabama states that a murderer of that State addressed the following note to the Governor: "I wish you would give me a respite for thirty days. I am short in religion. I intended to get it last week, but was too busy."

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, "What is the Matter with France?"
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Pagan Sources of Christian Belief."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, G. H. Perris, "Despotism by Newspaper."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "Bismarck."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "Peter the Great."
WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road): November 3, at 8.15, A. Milne, "Theosophy." To be followed by discussion.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "A Stroll through the British Museum"; Peckham Rye: 3.15, R. P. Edwards, "Secularism and Christianity."
HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Mr. Hunter.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Davis.
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, R. P. Edwards;
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): E. J. Sale—11, "The Futility of Prayer"; 7, "The Children of Christian England."
ORATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Vocal and Instrumental Concert.
DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, O. Turner (a Christian), "Is there a God?"
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, Impromptu Speeches; 6.30, Social meeting.
GATESHEAD (Town Hall): Harry Snell—3, "What Freethought Teaches"; 7, "Emile Zola and the Dignity of Doubt."
HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall): 7, G. Smith, "The Acceptation of the Principle of Evolution by the Catholic Church."
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): O. Cohen—11, "The Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer"; 6.30, "The Jewish Testimony to Christ."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): J. M. Robertson—11, "Patriotism and the Militarist Ideal"; 8, "The Ethics of an Intellectual Life"; 7, "The Evolution of the God Idea."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, O. Pegg, "A Trip to Paris." Lantern views.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant evening in Musical and other recitals, etc.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—October 30, Leicester; November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsforth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—November 27, Liverpool. December 4, Leicester. 18, Birmingham.

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