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## THE CZAR'S PEACE MESSAGE.

NEARLY two thousand years ago, at the birth of the actual or legendary founder of Christianity, the old records say that angelic voices were heard singing in the sky of peace on earth and goodwill towards men. This was a beautiful and touching prophecy, but it has not been fulfilled. It may indeed be truthfully said that the pious followers of the Prince of Peace have usurped far more than their fair share of quarrelling and fighting. Most of the great battlefields of modern times are in Christian countries. The names of great conquerors, generals, and admirals are more familiar to Christian nations than the names of great poets, scientists, and philosophers. A stream of blood runs through the whole history of Christendom. People who talk of love and charity are the foremost in dispute and aggression. It is the Christian nations that organise the colossal armies, build the terrible battleships, construct the big guns and rifles, and manufacture the awful explosives. It is the Christian nations that carry the arts of destruction to what only a few years ago was an unimagined degree of development. It is the Christian nations that wield what Mr. Gladstone most unhappily, as a Christian, called the resources of civilisation. It is the Christian nations that will not let others live at peace. It is the Christian nations that go buccaneering, slaughtering, and stealing all over the world; and the chief cause of discord amongst them is the division of the spoil.

Certainly modern Europe is in a strange and perilous condition. Less than four hundred thousand soldiers, in the palmy days of the Roman empire, sufficed to keep the peace amongst a multitude of races, nationalities, and tribes, and to protect an enormous frontier from the incursions of the outer barbarians. Now the soldiers of Europe are counted by the million. Armies that singly outnumber by several times all the legions of Rome are grasping arms and glaring at each other across the map-lines which separate their respective territories. And the cost of warlike preparations is simply appalling. Europe spends two hundred millions every year on its armies and navies, and another two hundred millions in the shape of interest on its war debts. England alone has spent nearly six thousand millions in this way during the present century. Moreover, the war-budget of every country goes on increasing. There is a swift race in prodigality. The moment one government lays out an extra pound on military or naval material, every other government sees reason for capping the expenditure. Europe is rushing on to universal bankruptcy. At the present rate the catastrophe is only a question of time. Italy is nearly ruined already, and her fate to-day will be the fate of richer nations to-morrow.

All over the continent the conscription prevails. Young men are withdrawn from industrial life at the very time when they should be settling down to their careers. They are removed from domestic influences—from the sagacious eye of the father, the loving eye of the mother, the appealing eye of the sister—at the most critical time of life, when such influences are the most precious, seeing it is then often decided whether the youth shall be a man or a beast. They are herded together in barracks, and what that means is better left to imagination. Evil always springs from the separation of the sexes. And although the French government orders the prosecution of a writer who passionately impeaches the system which is debauching and demoralising his countrymen, everybody knows

that he is telling the truth, with whatever degree of exaggeration. Nor is this all. The conscription, which is a very recent thing, is chiefly responsible for the wave of reaction which has surged all over Europe. You cannot pass all your young men through the army without their catching its spirit of authority and submission. Hence we see that despotism has taken a new lease of life. Liberty is not the watchword it was fifty years ago. Even under the Republic in France it is dangerous to run counter to the new tyranny which, in the name of the national honor, has transformed the Army from a servant into an idol, and set the mob howling at the few brave advocates of freedom and justice.

Finally, it must be confessed that no two Christian nations in Europe have a spark of love for each other. There is not so much as a scintillation of honest friendship. The alliances we hear of from time to time are always based upon the most sordid self-interest. They are nothing but the alliances of thieves and burglars in face of cunning and unscrupulous rivals. Each nation hates every other nation. Their jealousy of each other is positively sickening. They could have stopped the Armenian massacres with a word, but they could not speak it, because the Turk is the sick man of Europe, and all the Christian powers were anxious to get the biggest share of his belongings. They could not so much as settle the poor little Cretan question, and for the very same reason. Indeed, that little question would not have been settled even now if the Turks had not committed the bad mistake of shooting some English soldiers and sailors, which put Admiral Noel's back up, and made him go in and play the whole game off his own bat. And good luck to him! as the man in the street says. He had a heart in his breast, and a head on his shoulders; and we may well be proud that such a man was there at the moment to speak strongly in the name of England for common sense and common humanity. Whenever such interests are to be subserved we shall always be glad to know that an English admiral is about with the resolution to stand "no damned nonsense."

Well, at this moment, when even the great American Republic is entering upon a fresh career, and is talking of doubling or trebling its army, and multiplying its battleships; at this moment, we say, it is curious that the Czar of all the Russias, the most autocratic ruler in Europe, should issue an appeal to the whole civilised world in favour of peace, or at least of retrenchment in expenditure on preparations for war.

The Czar's circular to all the foreign powers represented at the Court of St. Petersburg is a striking document. Whether its main ideas are entirely his own or not, it is probable that a more practised hand than his own is responsible for its drafting. It points out that war charges everywhere "follow an upward march" and "strike at public prosperity at its very source"; that "the intellectual and physical strength of the nations, labor and capital, are for the major part diverted from their natural application and unproductively consumed"; that "hundreds of millions are devoted to acquiring terrible engines of destruction, which, though to-day regarded as the last word of science, are destined to-morrow to lose all value in consequence of some fresh discovery in the same field"; that this armed peace is becoming "a crushing burden" to all nations, and that "if this state of things were prolonged it would inevitably lead to the very cataclysm which it is desired to avert, and the horrors



of which make every thinking being shudder in advance." In view of this horrid state of things, and in order if possible to effect a serious improvement, the Czar proposes a general Conference, which he presumes would have "the help of God." "It would converge," he says, "into one powerful focus the efforts of all the States which are sincerely seeking to make the great conception of universal peace triumph over the elements of trouble and discord. It would at the same time cement their agreement by a corporate consecration of the principles of equity and right, on which rest the security of States and the welfare of peoples."

Now we are altogether in favor of peace. We have written as strongly as we could against war. We were in the field long before the Czar entered it. But admirable sentiments, however finely expressed, are not everything. Every proposal on behalf of a great public object must be considered from all points of view, and especially from those of reason and practicability. And this is the task before us.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

### THE WELFARE OF OTHERS.

SAMUEL JOHNSON once said: "It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives." This is the Secular view of existence, and indicates an imperative duty that devolves upon those who desire to promote personal and general happiness. While the one object of professed orthodox Christians is to consider their manner of death, and what is to follow that event, the principal study of Secularists is to discover the best mode of living, and what will be the results of our actions upon ourselves and others on this side of the tomb. The advantage of the latter course is evident from the fact that he who has spent a useful and upright life has adopted the correct course to secure a peaceful and contented death. The Christian plan is to endeavor to "serve two masters"—God and man; but the method of Secularists is to confine their services to benefitting mankind and protecting the lower animals. The Rev. W. P. Hanks, of St. Peter's Church, Bayswater, in noticing the orthodox object of life, writes in the *Church Gazette* thus: "Our nineteenth-century Christianity is, for the most part, an elaborate attempt to serve two masters, to love the one and tolerate the other; to hold to the one, and hang on by the skirts of the other; and that is because we serve neither, but hold only to our own interests, and love only our own selves." Certain Christians, continues the rev. gentleman, "find that it pays to go to church, and to contribute something towards philanthropy. They regard the religion of Jesus Christ as a species of eternal life assurance, and think that they can have preference shares in salvation as in a joint-stock company; they care not whether they be just or unjust, so that they succeed" (August 20, 1898).

This is a severe condemnation both of Christian conduct and the motive which prompts it; and, coming as it does from a Christian source, it cannot be ascribed to "infidel misrepresentation." We have always regarded Christianity as being the very incarnation of selfishness. The work, such as it is, that many of the Christians perform is inspired by a desire to please their God, and thereby secure the salvation of their own souls. With such believers virtue has little or no charms if not evoked by "love for Christ." Nobility, generosity, and devotion to man's welfare are deemed of minor importance unless stimulated by the hope of future bliss. To the considerations of some other supposed life the interests of the present one must yield. True freedom is denied to those who are outside the Christian fold. Freethought, when exercised in opposition to Christianity, is thought to be the influence of the "evil one," and man is thereby made a slave to the teachings of a degrading theology. He is told that religion emanated from God, and to this alleged supernatural power all must bow. A knowledge of man's origin and destiny is claimed by the clergy, and they persist in informing their followers that they are responsible to the Being "who made them," and that, if they ignore such responsibility, everlasting perdition will be their fate. Such erroneous teachings as these cannot possibly enhance the welfare of the human race. How different the broad, dignified, and

ennobling inculcations of Secularism are will be seen from the following words of Colonel Ingersoll: "Man has found that he must give liberty to others in order to have it himself. He has found that a master is also a slave; that a tyrant is himself a serf. He has found that governments should be founded and administered by man and for man; that the rights of all are equal; that the powers that be are not ordained by God; that woman is at least the equal of man; that men existed before books; that religion is one of the phases of thought through which the world is passing; that all creeds were made by man; that everything is natural; that we know nothing of origin and destiny; that concerning the unknown we are all equally ignorant; that the pew has the right to contradict what the pulpit asserts; that man is responsible only to himself and those he injures, and that all have a right to think."

There are two phrases, comparatively modern, which are frequently used by ethical writers—namely, Egoism and Altruism. The former means the desire to benefit oneself, and the latter the wish to benefit others. Now, accepting this signification of the terms, neither of them would fairly represent our idea of what human conduct should be. That there is too much selfishness in the world is a fact which we must all deplore, and that there are too many persons who, in seeking the gratification of their desires, have no concern as to the effect of their own conduct upon others is also a truth to be regretted. But, notwithstanding this, we see no adequate reason why self should be entirely sacrificed in working for the welfare of others. To do good by promoting the comfort and happiness of others ought not to be thought a sacrifice, but rather one of the pleasurable duties of life. Men can only be truly happy while others around them are in a similar condition. The selfish happiness, surrounded by ignorant, debased, and starving multitudes, is essentially inhuman, and must of necessity interfere with one's personal comfort and welfare. Such "happiness" is in itself ignoble, and can only be enjoyed in the absence of benevolence and brotherly love. It ignores the welfare of others, and therefore it is bound to deteriorate the conditions upon which real happiness is based. Experience has taught that one of the best means a person can adopt for self-improvement is to work for the improvement of those who need it. This we regard as the highest Altruism, for we thoroughly believe with Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, "That which is not good for the swarm, neither is it good for the bee."

We urge, therefore, that there is nothing in Egoism, properly understood, to interfere with the real happiness of the general community. By real happiness we mean such as is worthy of an intelligent and cultivated being. If a rich person, living in luxury amidst a population degraded by want, misery, and ignorance, asserts that he is quite happy, we can believe that he is so according to his nature; but we cannot consider him happy according to the true ideal of happiness. As to the motives by which men generally act, they may be shortly summed up in the desire for happiness, hence the necessity of having a clear idea of the difference between the vulgar, selfish, isolated happiness, which is essentially inhuman, and the lofty, unselfish, social happiness, which is essentially human. Believers in orthodox Christianity, impressed with the cheerful notion of the sinfulness of human nature, and that those who do not believe in Christ as the Savior of mankind are to be eternally punished, cannot enjoy a high state of happiness. Such figments do not involve "the highest good of all men," inasmuch as there are millions who cannot believe in Christ, as Christianity requires; and for those to be taught that in some future world they are to be cruelly punished for not doing what to them is an impossibility is not calculated to confer upon them much good. Punishment is here held out as a revenge, instead of being employed as a corrective. It is absurd to talk of a faith imparting happiness which teaches: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36).

A man who thinks he believes this miserable declaration may fancy he is "happy"; but why? Because he supposes that he has made his peace with God. What, however, of the thousands around him who are degraded and sinful, and doomed to perdition? Where does their happiness come in? "Many are called, but few are chosen." No; it cannot be truthfully denied that the "happiness" of Christianity is a sham, and that the incentive to its "bliss"



is a delusion. To be happy in its noblest sense Secularists have a stronger and better motive than Christians possess. With them (the Secularists) the love of their fellow-creatures, whom they know, is far superior, as an incentive, to the fear of God, or even the love of God, whom they do not know. This is the essential question: Shall we all work together for the mutual good of each other, or shall we work in fear and love of a supernatural being who, even if he exist, is unknown to us? This is our answer: We love those whom we see and know, and with and for them we will work; but as Secularists we cannot love and work for one whom we cannot see nor know; and if this supposed being is almighty, he requires no help from us, for the simple reason that he has the power to achieve whatever he desires. Besides, not having any knowledge of him or his desires, we might work against him, thinking we were working for him, as Christian persecutors have done when they thought, in punishing and putting to death heretics, that they were doing God's service.

The best way, in our opinion, to secure the welfare of others is to strive to secure for ourselves characters that shall be above reproach, and that shall be worthy of the emulation of others; and, at the same time, to persistently labor for the equal rights of all. By the term "equal rights of all" is here meant their equal rights to proper living, to the training of all their faculties of body and mind, and to the free exercise and development of these, in so far as such exercise does not infringe the equal rights of others.

CHARLES WATTS.

### GETTING BACK TO JESUS.

IN its somewhat lengthy career Christianity has rested its claims upon three things: the Church, the Bible, and the personality of Jesus. The first of these broke down definitely, so far as a growing proportion of the world's inhabitants are concerned, in that series of changes which culminated in the Reformation. Even the Church of Rome itself, though still claiming infallibility, has within recent years seriously modified its claims; while denunciations of what they please to call "Churchianity" nowadays come thick and fast from Protestant preachers. And, as to the second, modern criticism has so riddled the orthodox claims on behalf of the Bible that one may safely assert that there are not in England and Germany a dozen scholars, with a reputation worth losing, who would publicly champion the view of the Bible that was entertained by the generality of Christians when Paine wrote his *Age of Reason*.\* Somewhere or other in the Bible, we are told, there lies hidden God's message to man, although just where the message lies hidden God only knows.

The last resource of all is the personality of Jesus, and that, to use a colloquialism, is now being played for all it is worth. Dr. Watson, Ian Maclaren of novelist fame (?), declares that the religion of Protestants rests neither in a Church nor in the Bible, nor in any part of the Bible, but in the personality of Jesus Christ, and that the thing for which our age is hungering is to have the real Jesus stripped of all the fancies of Churches and theologians, and placed before the world for its homage and guidance. That we have no reliable evidence whatever about the "real Jesus," or that such evidence as we have in the anonymous undated gospels depicts contradictions too glaringly absurd to have ever been combined in a single individual, never troubles Dr. Watson in the least. His method is simplicity itself. Anything that Watson would have said if he had been in Jesus' place is a genuine piece of autobiography; anything that Jesus is reported to have said that Watson would not have said is an interpolation by dishonest or ignorant commentators. Like the ambitious mathematician who said that Newton was fortunate in there being only one law of gravitation to discover, Dr. Watson evidently believes that Jesus was fortunate in being born before him. Had the order been reversed, the name of the world's savior might have commenced with a letter much nearer the end of the alphabet.

\* Dean Farrar says that among all the German scholars there is only one, "and he a man of no name," who clings to the orthodox view (*The Bible and the Child*, p. 25).

But this cry of apologetic Christians is worthy of note, as showing the extent to which Freethought is influencing even those who profess to cast its claims on one side as worthless. To find an increasing hesitancy in championing the claims of either Church or Bible; to find even Jesus, the God incarnate, placed in a secondary position, and Jesus, the man—Jesus as a kind of glorified Keir Hardie or sublimated Lord Shaftesbury—preached in their place, is only a tacit admission that the Secular view of life is, after all, far more correct than the one hitherto held by the majority of the people. Imitation is only flattery in action, and a great deal of what is now heard from apologetic pulpits is only a faint echo of truths that have long been commonplaces on the Secular platform.

To assert that the main object of Christ was to teach men how to lead good lives here is a complete abandonment of Christianity's original and historic position. It is not even hinted in the New Testament that the main inducement of the people to listen to Jesus, or for the disciples to follow him, was the beauty of his moral precepts. The most powerful of his followers, Saul of Tarsus, was converted by a supernatural revelation while on the road to Damascus, and not by moral maxims with which he must have been familiar from boyhood. In the whole literature of primitive Christianity, whenever the moral precepts of Jesus are dwelt upon, they are treated as subsidiary, and usually only quoted to repel attacks made upon them by pagan writers. Stoicism was then too much alive for Christians to make the absurd claim of the superiority of Christian ethics that has been made by later writers. It was Jesus, the God incarnate, who could save people from the flames of hell, and secure them the eternal felicity of heaven, that was the motive which induced the people to rank themselves as Christians, not the enunciation of moral maxims that were as well known then as now. The literature of historic Christianity is full of the same lesson, and only when the progress of thought rendered it increasingly difficult for educated men and women to believe in the virgin-born, miracle-working, devil-casting Messiah of earlier generations, was the argument of the supreme moral importance of Christ's teaching resorted to as a method of retaining people who were grown too sceptical to accept Christianity in its orthodox form, albeit still too religious to reject it altogether. The cry of "Back to Jesus," with its wholesale rejection of historic Christianity, is only one of the many endeavors now being made to accommodate old beliefs to current thought, and, when analysed, is even more worthless than the usual run of Christian apologetics.

For what does the ordinary Christian mean by getting back to the real Jesus? and how does he propose to do it? The truth is, that every Christian necessarily starts his inquiry with a stock of prepossessions that must be fatal to his examination. He begins by believing that the teachings of Jesus contain the only cure for the world's ailment, and an inquiry conducted in that spirit usually has but one result. One of the most ridiculous sights I know of is men like the Rev. Walter Adeney, Professor Clifford, or Dr. Horton pretending to conduct an impartial inquiry into the character of Jesus Christ. As though anyone has the least doubt, except for occasional accidental admissions, what the general tenor of their addresses will be. They are in the position of counsel for the defence laying down the case for the prosecution. All that their "getting back to Jesus" means is that, starting with a conception of what is necessary for nineteenth-century requirements, they reject everything discordant with that conception that is recorded in the Four Gospels, gloss over difficulties, close their eyes to absurdities, read into the character of Jesus all that they wish to take out, and then hold up the result as a picture of the real Jesus. All that they have done is to fashion a figure out of their own prepossessions, prejudices, and religious training, buried a nineteenth-century reformer—of a sort—in Judæa, and then unearthed him with a loud flourish of trumpets as being of the same age as the rubbish heaps with which he is covered. And this they call getting back to Jesus!

And not only is the Christian completely unqualified to form a faithful picture of Jesus, even as recorded in the Gospels; but many professing Rationalists, while free from a great many of the prejudices that beset a Christian, are not always free from the influence of their early training or religious environment. John Stuart Mill's "excessive panegyric" of Christ, as John Morley mildly called it, was as clear a case



of "concession to the existing theology," to quote Bain's terse criticism, as any in our language. And when we add to Mill the name of a writer like Lecky, who, in the face of his own works demonstrating that the Christian ages properly rank among the lowest in the world's civilised history, yet declares that the character of Jesus has been "not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice," it is clear that it is by no means an easy task to shake off the power of the present in order to form a faithful picture of the past.

Even the most careful student of the past will always impart something of present-day life into its doings. A man is not a mere recording machine, and necessarily his reading of the past will be more or less colored by his general temperament. Yet the conclusions of an unbeliever on the character of Jesus will generally be worth more than those of a believer. For while both start with the same general environment, and usually the same education, the opinions of one are, at best, only a development of his early prejudices, while those of the other are formed in spite of their influence. And a conclusion reached in spite of one's prepossessions is naturally of more value than one that owes its being to their existence.

And why all this anxiety to discover what Jesus really did teach, or to found our lives on some interpretation of his doctrine? While it was held that the ethical precepts current in the name of Jesus originated with him, or while it was believed that the world's welfare depended upon accepting him as "very God of very God," there was some plausibility about the desire to model our lives in accordance with his teachings. But nowadays, when the "New Theology" teaches that Jesus was only one out of many teachers who were inspired of God, and when it is admitted that the moral precepts in the Four Gospels are in no way peculiar to Jesus, but are found in various forms elsewhere, even this pretext is available no longer. And let the teachings attributed to Jesus be either good or bad, the question is quite apart from any belief in his personality. The validity of the law of gravitation, of the principle of natural selection, or of the conservation of energy, is absolutely independent of the men whose names are associated with their discovery; and even if it were demonstrated that neither Newton nor Grove nor Darwin ever existed, these principles would yet remain as valuable as ever. All truth rests squarely upon its own basis. Only when it is felt that there is nothing to commend a belief in the shape of reason is it necessary to drag in a personality to support its claims.

"What think ye of Christ?" may be an important question from a doctrinal point of view; it may be a catchy phrase for demagogic orators, hungering for popular applause; it may even be a question of life or death to the forty or fifty thousand people who constitute the "Black Army" of Great Britain; but from an ethical point of view the query is absolutely worthless.

I do not believe that the world need be tied to any one man as a pattern for its guidance. I believe there are lessons of warning or guidance to be taken from most lives; but I do not believe that it is either wise or profitable to chain the world to the waist-belt of a poor Jewish peasant, who, in all that has really contributed to the world's civilisation, showed himself to be upon pretty much the same level as the people around him.

At bottom there is only one reason why the cry of "Back to Jesus" is indulged in. He is the figure-head and foundation of a religious system, and, unless his personality is believed in and a feeling encouraged that in some manner the ethical precepts hitherto associated with Christianity are inseparable from him, the foundation upon which all our Churches and chapels are built begins to crumble to pieces. It is a parson's cry pure and simple. The anxiety of the clergy is not for the ethical teaching associated with Jesus, but for the Jesus associated with the teaching. It is the cry of a trade union asking that its occupation be not destroyed—a cry as selfish in its origin as it is ridiculous and useless in its application.

C. COHEN.

Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation; all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not.—*Bacon.*

## JONAH AND JESUS.

A GREAT many jokes have been cracked about Jonah—and by Christians too. It is not easy to say why that prophet and his wonderful whale should be considered fair sport by professing Christian believers. The Book of Jonah is as much a part of the Bible as the Gospel of St. John. And its main incident is not more incredible or more comical than others that appear in the Scriptures, the New Testament being in that respect quite as remarkable as the Old.

Sometimes one is apt to feel that Jonah is being rather unfairly treated. He may himself, if he exists in the spirit, consider that he has grave cause of complaint; and not, indeed, for the first time in his life, as we learn from his story. Supposing him to be with the saints and angels in heaven, may he not be deeply annoyed at finding himself the subject of so much unseemly jocularly on earth?

No one likes to be laughed at, from Emperor William downwards. Our great statesmen affect to be indifferent to caricature and personal jest. Yet it is not to be doubted that occasionally they feel the sting. Possibly even a saint is not impervious, and Jonah may, therefore, experience now and again more than a little chagrin.

It does seem a trifle hard, after having gone through all the perils of that memorable voyage, to find the narrative of one's sufferings received with incredulous smiles, or unfeeling jesting comments.

Worst of all, the ill-treatment is so invidious. People don't make so much fun at the expense of the other prophets. No one troubles to laugh at Habakkuk, except it may be at his name. All the other prophets, major and minor, have a distinct "pull" over poor Jonah. Elisha, the bald head, for instance, may walk about the realms of bliss with inward peace and quiet satisfaction. Mortals are not eternally firing off little witticisms about him. He does not figure under the head of "Facetiæ." He had his own adventures, it is true, and they were nearly as funny as Jonah's. But he thanks God—or if he doesn't he ought to—every day of his eternal life that he never had anything to do with a whale.\*

Fortunately, vulgar chaff is not permitted in heaven. We know that, because we shall have to give an account at the judgment of every idle word spoken on earth. If it were not for this assurance that there is no "chipping" in Abraham's bosom, we might imagine very bad times, sore trials of patience, indeed, for the unhappy prophet, even in his heavenly home. I mean, of course, at the hands of his celestial *confrères* who were once in the same line of business on earth.

What, in such a case, would be more irritating than to have Jeremiah, for instance, coming up, and exclaiming in his cheery way: "Jonah, do you know what they are calling you now down below? They say you are an *allegory*." Might not Jonah be justly angry at being called an allegory or a myth, and at his time of life, too?

Imagine Daniel coming up with some such question as: "Jonah, have you seen the latest wheeze about the whale in the *Carolina Cocktail*? Sad dogs those Yanks for profane jokes. Thank God my lions are not of much use to them; not worth a red cent by the side of your whale."

Could we blame poor Jonah if, in the bitterness of his spirit, he demanded to know why these sub-lunary jokers couldn't leave him alone and get on to Moses' talking serpent, or Balaam's ass, or the Apocalyptic beast with seven heads and ten horns? When, further, the old Obadiah—because he must be old by this time—observed, "Jonah, I see a lot of chestnuts still on the trot anent that fish tale of yours," would it be in diaphanous feathers to stand it and not swear?

In the flesh Jonah, as we know, was a hot-tempered man, though his name signifies a *dove*. In the matter of the gourd he said: "I do well to be angry, even unto death." The Lord, who could himself be angry enough at times, gave him a salutary lesson on his ebullition of temper; and this suggests a most important reflection in regard to the jokes referred to. May it not be that Jonah, though in heaven, is doomed to endure all this earthly *persiflage* at his expense as a further chastening of his once-rebellious spirit? I offer this hint to learned expounders of the Word and of the conditions of heavenly life.

Speaking generally, it must be frankly admitted that the

\* Or shark—if commentators think that that fish afforded Jonah more comfortable lodgings.







Amid the crowd of spectators, some strong man may have ground his teeth with rage at the infamous spectacle; some tender-hearted woman may have yearned to kiss that noble brow bedewed by pain; some child may have been saddened by the anguish of those steadfast eyes. But they were unknown to the sufferer, who stood there in solitary and awful grandeur. He gazed at a sea of hostile faces; he was alone against the world. "Surely," we have elsewhere written, "the knight of Liberty, the champion of Freethought, who lived such a life and died such a death, without hope of reward on earth or in heaven, sustained only by his indomitable manhood, is worthy to be accounted the supreme martyr of all time. He towers above the less disinterested martyrs of faith like a colossus: the proudest of them might walk under him without bending."

The space left at our disposal does not permit of a detailed account of Bruno's philosophy. Indeed, it is an exaggeration to say that he had a philosophy; nor had the time come for it, even if he possessed the systematic mind for the task. He rather seized on certain new ideas then just broached, championing them with matchless courage, and developed them with wonderful audacity. The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century has attracted most attention; but the scientific movement was the most important, as it heralded a new era of civilisation. Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo were its mathematicians; Bruno was its poet, prophet, and martyr.

Bruno was enraptured with the new astronomy, which dwarfed the earth, but showed that the universe was grander than the theologians supposed. The earth, he said, turns on its own axis, and it moves round the sun. He was the first to teach that the sun also turns on its own axis, and that the earth is flattened at the poles. He insisted that the atmosphere is an integral part of the earth; that all the fixed stars are suns, having their own systems of visible and invisible planets. These truths are common to schoolboys now; but then it required the intuition of genius to perceive them, and the courage of a hero to proclaim them. No danger or odium now attaches to such doctrines; but the teacher of them in that age might at any moment expect his sky to redden with a mist of blood.

Like Montaigne, Bruno derided the notion that the heavenly lights were fixed as torches for man. "Only one bereft of his reason," he said, "could believe that those infinite spaces, tenanted by vast and magnificent bodies, many of which are certainly entrusted with a higher destiny than ours, are designed only to give us light or to receive the clear shining of the earth." Professor Tyndall remarked also, in his Belfast Address, that Bruno not only reached "the sublime generalisation that the fixed stars are suns," but came still closer to our present lines of thought by concluding that "nature does not imitate the technic of man," and by asserting that "Matter is not the mere naked, empty capacity which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother who brings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb." There is a striking passage in Bruno's treatise on the *Cause*, in which he anticipates the idea of Hamlet as to the metamorphoses of matter. "Seest thou not," he says, "what was seed becomes grass, the grass becomes corn, the corn becomes bread, bread becomes chyle, blood, man; the man becomes a corpse, and that turns to earth, and so forth, till all things attain to all the forms of nature." Bacon finely says that we are the ancients of the world, and what we call antiquity was its youth. But he was anticipated by Bruno, who said: "The title of innovator which is fixed upon us is not ignominious. There is no doctrine in antiquity which was not at one time new; and if ago is the mark of truth, our century is fuller of dignity than the century of Aristotle, since the world has now attained a greater age by twenty centuries."

Very daring were some of Bruno's utterances on the side of his thought which directly faced theology. "A time would come," he wrote, "a new and desired ago, in which the gods should lie in Orcus, and the fear of everlasting punishment should vanish." He expressed a profound contempt for the Christian dogmas of original sin, election, and salvation by faith. "There is a dastardly race of pedants," he wrote, "who, doing no good thing, either by the divine law or by the laws of nature, esteem themselves, and desire to be esteemed, religious and pleasing to the gods, saying that though it is well to do good, and evil to do wrong, we can only be made acceptable to the gods, not on account of the good we may do or

the evil we leave undone, but by hoping and believing according to the catechism."

Too much importance, we think, is attached by Bruno's English biographer to his Pantheistic heroics. They were common amongst the poets of that age. Still more do we object to the pretty little sermon which ends this volume being regarded as containing the quintessence of Bruno's thought and the intellectual purpose of his life. We respectfully submit that Bruno's martyrdom is not the thing to serve as a tag to such an effusion. We even venture to assert that his Pantheistic raptures would never have caused his martyrdom. He died for two things: first, the new scientific ideas, which have since conquered; and secondly, for Truth itself, which he called the philosopher's mistress, and the only object worthy of a true man's reverence.

We note in the Preface of this volume that "It is in contemplation to print a second volume, containing a summary of the works, with the documents of the trial and other confirmatory evidence." Such a volume will be welcomed, we imagine, by a considerable circle of readers. But we trust that the editress will keep her eye strictly on the subject, let Bruno speak always for himself, and show less anxiety to defend him "against the unjust and terrible imputation of Atheism," as she pathetically calls it, without condescending to inform us how any opinion as to the constitution of the universe can be either "terrible" or an "imputation."

Pantheism, Atheism, Theism, and all other abstractions sink into insignificance beside the grandeur of Bruno's life and death. Speculations of that kind amuse, interest, and inflame us; but true inspiration is to be found in principles that affect humanity, and in far-shining examples of virtue and courage. Bruno has exercised, indirectly, no mean influence on modern thought; but it is the heroism of his career that most profoundly affects us, and has now become a permanent glory of our race. He worshipped Truth, the revealer and savior; he sacrificed reputation and life on her altar; he cried for "the clearness of the young morning," and then he exclaimed "the outrage of the rabble, the storms of Time, the slings and arrows of Fortune, shall fall upon this tender body, and shall weld it to steel." These were not cheap heroics; they did but express the fiery daring of his heart; and such glorious courage is worth a hundred systems. G. W. FOOTE.

## ACID DROPS.

WE are glad to see both *Reynolds* and the *Clarion* tackling hypocritical Hugh Price Hughes for objecting to Mr. Newman's Sunday Concerts at the Queen's Hall because he may make a little profit on them. *Reynolds* wants to know whether Price Hughes pays rent for St. James's Hall, and whether he gets paid for talking there—on Sunday. If he does, he had better hold his tongue (our contemporary says) about what other people make on "the Lord's Day." The *Clarion* writes in much the same vein, and suggests that the men of God want a monopoly of Sunday money-taking. That's the whole truth in a nutshell.

The Rev. A. F. Henderson, preaching in Augustine Church, Edinburgh, on "How to Spend the Sunday," did not deny that a little relaxation was necessary; but people ought not to neglect going to the house of God—where, of course, the man of God is waiting for customers. The reverend gentleman had heard that churches were not attractive enough. Well, he said, let them be made more attractive. But is it possible to do this without introducing side-shows?

Canon Shuttleworth is mistaken in telling the *Daily News* that he was "the pioneer of popular Sunday music in London," having begun it fourteen years ago at St. Nicholas Cole-Abbey. The Sunday League, started and long worked almost exclusively by Freethinkers, was active for a very considerable time before that. But you generally find some minister of religion ready to claim everything, even when it clearly belongs to the "infidels."

Dr. Fox, the Cardiff Quaker, has been condemning British foreign policy as un-Christian. England, he said, relied on ships, not on God. Well, that's true. But suppose England relied on God, and other nations relied on ships, where the devil would England be, with half her population depending on foreign food supplies? Dr. Fox reminded his



audience that God could easily scatter our navy, as he scattered the Armada. But the Armada was not scattered until the English ships had played Old Harry with it, and driven it into the North Sea from the English Channel. If this is all that Dr. Fox has to offer us, we are afraid that peace is a long way off.

Dr. Fox follows Jesus Christ when it costs him nothing. Does he follow Jesus Christ in laying up no treasures on earth, and in taking no thought for the morrow? We should like to print (and criticise) his answer.

Rev. Dr. Hensley Henson, chaplain to the Bishop of St. Alban's, in his newly-published volume on *Apostolic Christianity*, makes some remarkable admissions. "Scarcely anybody," he says, "reads the New Testament; the current notions about the Gospel are largely based on the productions of Marie Corelli, Mr. Hall Caine, and writers of that type." "There is," he also says, "a widely extended mistrust of the good faith of the clergy in matters of religion. It is thought that language is used in the pulpit which does not correspond with any actual convictions." The greatest need of the day is "the recovery of public confidence in the clergy."

Rev. R. C. Fillingham, vicar of Hexton, has been inhibited by the Bishop of Peterborough from preaching or administering the sacrament in his diocese. Mr. Fillingham is a well-known Liberal and Anti-Ritualist, and recently spoke at a Liberation meeting in London.

Emperor William is reported to be greatly disillusioned by his visit to the "holy places" in Palestine. At Bethlehem, it is said, he addressed the clergy, and told them that the Christian Churches had failed in their object, which was to raise and ennoble the degraded people. He advised them to stick to charity and avoid disputes. But that advice has been given to the Christian Churches ever since the days of Constantine, and has always been fruitless.

The *Daily News* special correspondent in the wake of Emperor William speaks out very strongly on the humbug of Palestine. After describing the various rival shows, including two opposition Gardens of Gethsemane, and telling of the "slipshod, unwashed, blear-eyed monk" who showed him over one of the Churches of the Sepulchre, he writes as follows: "In everything except mechanical ritual—parrot-like repetition of formularies—Jerusalem strikes me as the most irreligious, or non-religious, city in the world. It is, without a doubt, the headquarters of lies, shams, and impostures of the ecclesiastical order."

There is an honest church in Toronto; and it is a sort of thing that, when found, should be made a note of. Jarvis-street Baptist Church has sent the City Treasurer a cheque for \$275, being its share of the city taxes for the year. The cheque was accompanied by a letter protesting against the exemption of ecclesiastical property from taxation.

Thursday, November 24, was Thanksgiving Day in the United States. President McKinley invited all his fellow citizens—not including the dead ones in Cuba and the Philippines—to "come together in their several places of worship for a service of praise and thanks to Almighty God for all the blessings of the year." The harvest has been abundant, trade and commerce have increased, and the American Eagle has had some fine voice practice in distant regions. Moreover, the Republicans continue in power, and William McKinley is President. What more does America want? Let us pray!

The *Boston Congregationalist* has been cited as having furnished evidence that hell is disappearing; but it protests against being held responsible for any sort of disbelief in future punishment, which is really "entering upon a path that leads to the abandonment of Christian faith altogether." The *Boston Transcript*, on the other hand, declares that the clergy themselves don't believe in a fiery, everlasting hell at all. This, again, is denied by Dr. Withrow, pastor of Park-street church, who says that Jesus did teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, and adds: "I do not see how a man can be a Christian who rejects the doctrine." Nor do we.

The Newark magistrates have a curious way of dealing with conscientious objectors under the new Vaccination Act. They demand proof of the child's birth, and will not even accept the father's sworn testimony unless he was in the room at the time. Behold, my son, said a great Swedish statesman, with how little wisdom the world is governed.

Libel actions are not the most profitable form of commercial enterprise. The Rev. W. Hughes, of Colwyn Bay, obtained judgment against the Rev. David Morgan Davies, of Shrewsbury, for slander, and the sum due to the plaintiff is £303. An order was made for the payment of £2 per

month, but it was not complied with; and as the defendant has a large family and only £100 a year, the County Court judge refuses to grant an order for his committal. Moral: Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Moral No. 2: It is often better, if you must take action, to thrash a slanderer than to sue him at law, especially when he happens to be a Christian minister.

At the recent Melbourne Christian Endeavor outbreak a sainted bootmaker gravely related that when, in the course of his business, he met with an obdurate piece of sole-leather, he always asked the Almighty to intercede with the recalcitrant bullock-hide, with the result that it at once became amenable to manipulation. He quite omitted to state why he didn't ask heaven to make the boots for him right out, and be done with it!—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Catholics and Protestants seem to have had a lively time together at Southampton. Mr. Ruthven's lectures against Catholicism were opposed by Father Scannell, and the usual good temper was displayed on both sides. There is certainly a marvellous harmony in the household of faith.

Ex-priest Slattery has been denouncing Roman Catholicism at Cardiff. The Protestants applauded him; the Catholics wanted his blood. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."

During the sensational meeting at Carnegie Hall at which Rev. A. B. Simpson raised in cash and pledges \$112,000 for foreign missions, he made this remarkable statement in referring to the progress of Christianity made possible by the partition of China: "God pounded at the gates with the battle-axe of war, and is now softening the blows by the discipline of famine." In other words, a minister of the gospel solemnly informed an audience of Christian people that God had taken sides with Japan against China in the recent war, and that the all-merciful and all-wise Creator, to further chasten a heathen nation, had cursed the land with famine, and starved thousands of innocent women and children. And all for the purpose of introducing the gospel of the lowly Nazarene among the followers of Confucius. Let us be merciful to the Rev. Simpson. It is charitable to conclude that the frenzy of enthusiasm into which he threw his hearers became a flood-tide that swept him from his logical, rational moorings. The Rev. A. B. Simpson is no doubt a worthy and devout man, but he has not cultivated the habit of careful speaking and sound thinking.—*New York Evening Journal*.

The *Liverpool Courier* prints a satirical letter from Frederick Austin—which we hope for the writer's sake is an assumed name—on the reason why Catholics want to preserve St. Winefrid's Well for holy instead of cleanly purposes. After referring to dirty and verminous saints who died in the full odor of sanctity, he says: "We Catholics prefer to be mangy, dirty, and disreputable. We glory in our shame. For health of body we care nothing. We consider the health of our immortal souls."

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Huddersfield branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Rev. E. Markby complained that half the population of Holland were without the Scriptures, that copies of the Bible were awfully scarce in Poland, and that there were only fifty Bibles in the whole of Iceland. Probably there is a still greater dearth at the North Pole. Anyhow the good people of Huddersfield are called upon to supply these deficiencies, and some of them are foolish enough to subscribe £104 3s. 7d. towards it. No wonder our lunatic asylums get fuller.

Rev. Dr. Mackennal, a Congregationalist minister who lately visited America, has been giving his "impressions" in the Ashton-on-Mersey Congregational Church. He was very strong on the Anglo-American understanding, and the "amazing destiny which God seemed to have been revealing to 120 millions of Christians, mainly Protestants," who were to become civilisers of the world. They were the people who really understood liberty, or, as the reverend gentleman hastened to put it, Christian liberty; by which he probably means the right of Christians to rule other people. For our own part, we value the Anglo-American friendship as much as any minister does; but we hate the cant of these professional soul-savers, and we dread the idea of England and America crusading all over the world in the interest of these men's trade—which is what Christianity comes to.

The *Progressive Thinker*, one of our American exchanges, says that a correspondent of Evangelist F. Campbell gives a lugubrious account of the condition of the Church in the rural portions of New York. Here is an extract from the gentleman's letter: "There are entire districts in the State where it is difficult to find a single family with church-going habits.....Even services brought into the community



within school-houses are sometimes strangely disregarded; the Sabbath is desecrated by visiting, ball-playing, and unnecessary manual labor; in some farming communities infidelity is getting a strong hold; a tremendous crowd turned out for the funeral of a rural sceptic, when it was understood the speaker was to be Colonel Ingersoll, and was much disappointed when the Baptist preacher appeared instead; a general spiritual deadness comes to rest upon the people, accompanied by a degree of ignorance which is difficult to imagine."

The *Railway Herald* reports a curious assault case at Eccles. James Fitzpatrick, a cattle drover, of Winton, was charged with annoying passengers on the London and North-Western Railway. Besides using abominable language all round, he put his fist into the face of a Strangeways tobacconist, Leopold King, presumably of the Hebrew persuasion, and exclaimed: "Can you fight? You — Jews killed my Savior." For this energetic championship of the crucified Nazarene, who may, or may not, be proud of his disciple, James Fitzpatrick was fined 20s. and costs, amounting in all to over £5. We advise him to go to France when he wants to do any more Jew-baiting. It is cheaper over there.

Protestants are getting alarmed at the advances of Romanism, outside and inside the Church of England. This alarm, however, is not very greatly shared by the newspapers, and an explanation of this fact is offered by the Rev. Dr. Horton (Congregationalist) to a *Westminster Gazette* interviewer. "The truth of the matter is," he observed, "that the Roman Catholic authorities utilise the services of the Press to an extent of which few who have not studied the matter have the smallest notion. At Maynooth preparation for journalism forms almost as much a part of the regular course as that for the priesthood, with the result that Roman Catholics exercise an amount of influence over the columns of the Protestant Press out of all proportion to their actual numbers. Without actually influencing, perhaps, the declared policy of the paper, or moulding its written utterances, they are yet able to exercise influence over the matter appearing in its columns in a very remarkable, and, as I hold, a very deplorable manner, so that, as I have said, it is next to impossible to get any ordinary newspaper, daily or weekly, to print that which needs saying on the subject of Romanism and its doctrines."

An Islington vicar has thought it necessary to announce, probably for good business reasons, that 16s. 6d. will no longer be charged at his church for tying the matrimonial knot. Henceforth he will tie up couples for 9s. 9d., which is about the same as the registrar's charges. Prayer and the blessing of God will be thrown in gratis, and the children of God are expected to give the preference to the old establishment.

According to the *Pall Mall Gazette's* "Own Correspondent," the old quarrel between the schoolmaster and the priest is breaking out again in France. The religious orders which were crippled by Gambetta, Paul Bert, and Jules Ferry have of late gained the ascendancy in education. The Jesuit schools are specially flourishing, and their pupils are taught reverence for the Church and hatred of the Republic. On the other hand, the State schools are "avowed hotbeds of Freethought"—simply, of course, because the priests are kept out of them. The French Government is said to be contemplating an attack on this problem, which is being considered by a very influential group in the Senate.

The London boy of twelve, who told the coroner that he did not know what an oath was, or anything about the Bible, was reported as attending a Board school; but Mr. A. J. Mundella, of the National Education Association, informs the *Daily News* that the boy really attended the Roman Catholic Voluntary school in Brent's-court, High-street, Southwark. That accounts for his ignorance of the Bible. We are not told what accounts for his ignorance of swearing.

Llandudno is not to go dirty on Sunday. The casting vote of the Council's chairman has saved it from that humiliation. Still, it was a very close shave; and the Sabbatarians, led by the men of God, vow to overturn this arrangement as soon as possible. They hold that cleanliness is next to godliness, but that there ought to be a whole Sunday between them.

William Johnson, tried at the London County Sessions for three daring robberies, handed in a written statement to Judge McConnell, who read it aloud in court. The prisoner thanked Providence for arresting him in his evil courses, and indulged in many pious reflections, which were intended to secure a light sentence; but the judge declared that he had only added hypocrisy to crime, and sentenced him to twelve months' hard labor.

Under another name masses for the dead are creeping into the Ritualistic churches. At St. Peter's, Southwark, four masses for the repose of the soul of a former vicar, the Rev. Father Herbert, were offered up before nine o'clock in the morning—which, we suppose, is the time most suitable for such petitions.

Signor Romussi, editor of the Milan *Secolo*, was sentenced to a frightful imprisonment by a military tribunal for writing articles calculated to unsettle men's minds. Angels and minister of grace, what a crime! This gentleman's real crime, after all, is that he is an enemy of priestcraft. He dared to unmask the clerical plots which led to the abortive revolution of May, and for this offence he is sent to herd with the criminal classes. King Humbert had better beware. He is storing moral dynamite under his own throne, and ought not to be surprised at an explosion.

"That Blessed Word 'Morality'" is the heading of a smart article in Mr. Hess's paper, the *Critic*. The writer deals with Sabbatarianism, the prosecution of Dr. Havelock Ellis's book, and the practical expulsion of Professor Marshall Hall, the Agnostic, from his Chair of Music at Melbourne University. We are glad to see our influential contemporary tilting against the "intolerable ethical earnestness" of pious busybodies.

According to the newspapers, a Berlin workman has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for sending Emperor William a letter filled with nonsensical speculations concerning the wickedness of the world. The punishment for insulting God Almighty varies in Germany from eight days to six months. It is easy to see, therefore, which is the more important personage.

Seriously, it seems to us that Emperor William must be a man of very small, contemptible character to allow so many of his subjects to be imprisoned for showing him any lack of respect. All the respect he is entitled to is the respect he earns; and the more he felt that he had earned respect the less he would be annoyed at its not being manifested. A little self-respect goes a long way towards compensating for the want of public testimonials.

Really great men are never afflicted with this paltry vanity. Can anybody imagine Shakespeare fussing round the town because someone said he was no poet, or Raphael in a passion because someone said he couldn't paint, or Napoleon raging because someone said he was no general?

M. Goblet, the French statesman, and one of notorious honesty as well as capacity, has come to a very sensible resolution. He is tired of politics and city life, and is going to settle down once for all in a village near Tours, where he will inhabit a wing which is being added to his brother's house. He will have the best of society—the society of those he loves and who love him; and find good acquaintances amongst his country neighbors. Instead of the noise and dust of Paris, he will have quiet and clean fresh air. Instead of telling lies, or winking at them, he will be able to speak and hear the truth every day and all day long. He will hear nature's sweet and unobtrusive music by day, and enjoy sound sleep by night, and read his books, and correspond with his friends, and take his share of the golden age. Happy, happy Monsieur Goblet!

Terah Hooley presented St. Paul's Cathedral with a service of gold Communion plate, valued at £1,500. Since then he has become bankrupt, and it was a question whether that Communion plate would not have to be returned to the Official Receiver. In order to avoid this frightful catastrophe, a number of good Churchmen have clubbed together and paid the Official Receiver the sum of £1,500. They desire to remain anonymous, and a *Morning* interviewer could get no news of their identity from the Bishop of London. "All I can tell you," Dr. Creighton said, "is that the money has been paid, and the difficulty is now at an end." Yes, and just in time to save the plate from being melted down.

"Providence" still allows the plague to afflict poor India. There is a large increase in the Dharwar district, the number of deaths being 2,200 in a single week.

### How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more) and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-shoots, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Fordor will send them on application.
- (5) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 27, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London: 7.30, "Christian Science, Peculiar People, and the Dying Faith."

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 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.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Mrs. B. M. Marks, 10s.

CHILDREN'S EXCURSION FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Mrs. B. M. Marks, 5s.

M. LOAFER.—We desire to express, for our own part, a high appreciation of your steady devotion to the work of the Freethought movement. Too many have axes to grind, or over-sensitive ambitions. It is good to meet with one who desires nothing but the success of the cause he labors for.

T. WILMOT.—You had better send notice of the entertainment for next week.

L. MARTIN.—Thanks for cuttings.

STUDENT.—Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, in the old small folio form, can be picked up for a guinea or so, sometimes cheaper, according to date and condition. It is delightful reading if you have leisure and taste for such compositions. Sidney's poems are included in some editions of the *Arcadia*. Some of them are very fine, particularly the sonnets that were so praised by Charles Lamb, whose critical faculty was well-nigh infallible.

C. P. (Southampton).—Mr. Foote would be happy to pay your town a visit if the local Freethinkers would only bestir themselves a little.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Subjects for Birmingham in due course.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Mrs. B. M. Marks, 5s.; George Crookson, 10s.; T. Wombwell, 1s.; A. Addy, 1s.

R. DAVIDSON.—The only qualification for a seat on the Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Limited, is membership and election at the annual Members' Meeting. Every member is as eligible as every other.

R. CHAPMAN (South Shields) informs us that since the *Secular Almanack* went to press Mr. J. Lamb, the local newsagent supplying this journal and other Freethought publications, has removed to 158 South Taylor-street.

ERNEST PACK asks us to state that he has removed to 10 Henstridge-place, Ordnance-road, St. John's Wood, N.W. Branch secretaries, etc., please note.

W. COX.—We have handed the new N. S. S. member's form to Miss Vance, to whom all such things should be sent direct. We note what you say as to remaining at the Alexandra Hall. Of course it is entirely a matter for local decision. At the same time, it is impossible to disguise the fact that the police have outwitted you. Being honest yourselves, you thought they were; whereas they simply wanted to destroy your chief source of income at your meetings, and to leave you, if possible, without a grievance that could be laid before the public.

T. OLLIBENSHAW.—We note your hope that next year's N. S. S. Conference will be held in London. Thanks for your good wishes.

A. E. ELDERKIN, Watford, Herb., is prepared to deliver lectures on the Secular platform. We know him to be well-informed, sincere, and earnest. The printed list of subjects he is ready to deal with is most appetising. Branches of the N. S. S. should apply for a copy.

LEON DUCHESNE.—We shall be glad to receive such cuttings if you will kindly send them.

H. F. S.—Thanks for your letter and your hopes for the success of the Secular Society, Limited.

R. F. MACK.—We are obliged for the reference.

G. CROOKSON.—You mistake us. We are not built to repay kindness with incivility. Thanks; see acknowledgments elsewhere. We have taken your hint and commenced a series of articles on the Czar's manifesto. You say it is hard for readers who cannot hear us lecture to imagine our views on this important topic. No doubt it is; and now they can give their imaginations a rest.

W. W. (Newcastle).—Your cuttings are welcome.

L. THOMAS.—The late J. M. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past* can still be obtained from Mr. Forder. We do not suppose the contemplated second volume will ever be issued. Even if the materials were all ready, no one could properly see it through the press but Mr. Wheeler himself.

W. F. HARRIS.—You will find the whole subject of Tacitus and the famous passage on the Christians at the time of Nero dealt with in Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *The Sign of the Cross*, written in review of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play. Good reasons are given for believing that passage to be a forgery. There are scholars who maintain that the *Annals* is a forgery altogether. Certainly it was never heard of before the fifteenth century. We have not space to dilate upon the matter here, and must refer you to the pamphlet, where all the facts are stated in a manner which should be intelligible to ordinary readers.

RECEIVED.—Two Worlds—Ethical World—Freidenker—Huddersfield Examiner—Southern Echo—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Liverpool Courier—Truth About Spiritualism—Crescent—Isle of Man Times—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Railway Herald—Manchester Guardian—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Clarion—Braun's Iconoclast—Torch of Reason—Sydney Bulletin—New Century—Secular Thought—Public Opinion—Newark Herald—People's Newspaper—Free Society—Bolton Evening News—Der Arme Teufel.

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

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.

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

THE 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 lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, this evening (Nov. 27), taking for his subject, "Christian Science, Peculiar People, and the Dying Faith." This is a lecture which Freethinkers should make a special effort to induce their orthodox friends to hear.

There was a very crowded audience at the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Meaning of Death"—Mr. Victor Roger, the new president of the Camberwell Branch of the N. S. S., being in the chair. Upon the platform were Messrs. Hartmann and Heaford, and in the body of the hall Messrs. Lees Sumner and H. Percy Ward, up for a brief holiday from Birmingham. The lecturer was in his best form, and the audience kept up a running fire of applause and laughter to the end, the final demonstration being particularly enthusiastic. Some criticism was offered by a Christian Evidence lecturer named Haile, who, unlike most of his tribe, was thoroughly good-tempered and polite. He differed from Mr. Foote very much, but he didn't know when he had enjoyed himself so much as in listening to the lecturer. This good-tempered critic had a good-tempered reply and a hand-shake at the finish.

Before his lecture Mr. Foote said a few words about the editor of the *South London Mail*. It was only a few words, because no more were necessary, the scribe who egged on the Hooligans of South London to break up the Freethought meetings on Peckham Rye having had to vacate his editorial chair in a hurried and undignified fashion. In the circumstances, Mr. Foote said that all he had to do was to congratulate Secularism on the fine advertisement it had enjoyed, and the Camberwell Branch on the way, at once brave and judicious, in which it had successfully upheld the flag of Freethought.

Last Sunday Mr. Watts lectured three times in Sheffield, to large and very appreciative audiences. We are glad to hear that Mr. Watts was in fine form. Friends from the surrounding districts mustered in good force. There was not much discussion, but in the afternoon several questions were asked, and a young Unitarian made an excellent speech from the "Agnostic Christian's" standpoint. Mr. Watts's reply was enthusiastically applauded.

To-day, Sunday (Nov. 27), Mr. Watts lectures, morning and evening, in the large Bristol school-room, Bristol-road, Birmingham.

The first General Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, was held on Friday evening, November 18, in the York Room of the Manchester Hotel. There was an excellent attendance of London members, and many proxies were sent up from country members, though there was no necessity to use any of them, as the voting was so unanimous. Mr. Foote, as chairman, had first of all to explain the absence of Mr. Forder, whose wife was lying dangerously ill. Then he proceeded to give a brief account of the Society's history, present position, and future prospects; incidentally stating that 124 members had already been enrolled, that several friends had already put the Society



in their wills for legacies, and that other friends are willing to do something shortly in the way of donations. For the present, he said, it would be advisable to elect directors living in London. Hereafter, if the Society grew as he hoped, it would be advisable to elect some directors living in the provinces, with enough Londoners to ensure a quorum at the Board meetings.

The election of a new Board of Directors followed, consisting of the full complement of twelve members. Their names are: G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, C. Cohen, A. B. Moss, R. Forder, S. Hartmann, Francis Neale, G. J. Warren, Victor Roger, George Ward, J. Neate, and Annie Brown. Only four lecturers are included, Mr. Foote not counting as such for the present, as he does not intend that the Society shall employ his services in any such way, at any rate until the next annual meeting. The laymen have a large majority, and the most fastidious critic ought to be satisfied with the relative composition of the new Board.

Miss E. M. Vance's appointment by the first Board as secretary was confirmed by the meeting, and a special vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Forder for acting as secretary *pro tem*. The meeting did not see its way to appointing auditors on the spot, and therefore instructed the new Board to engage the services of a chartered accountant for the first year's audit. After the asking and answering of various questions the meeting ended with a warm vote of thanks to the chairman for his work in building, launching, and piloting.

Mr. Foote will write at length on the subject of the Secular Society, Limited, in next week's *Freethinker*. Meanwhile, he refers the more anxious readers to what he has already written on the subject in the *Secular Almanack*.

The *Two Worlds*, a well-known Spiritualist paper, in its last issue doubts the very existence of Jesus the man. This is what it says in concluding a long article on the subject: "The priests invented the Trinity, and therefore invented the Holy Ghost; this, like all other priestly inventions, is myth, therefore the father of Jesus is myth; and, as by a law of nature each kind reproduces its own species, Jesus must be myth. We, for ourselves, therefore solve the Christian problem by accepting Jesus, the Christ, as a spiritual ideal personified, and we will neither hate, despise, nor quarrel with those who do not see with our eyes, if they will leave us alone."

Two successful Freethought demonstrations took place last Sunday in London. For this the rampant ruffianism of the Holy Hooligans was chiefly responsible. The morning demonstration was at Limehouse. This station has recently been infested by bigots of the baser type, who are green with envy at the larger and more intelligent audiences that fall to the share of the Secular lectures. On this occasion they imported a bevy of blatant "infidel-smashers," a cornet player, a female choir, and an asthmatical harmonium. All these attractions were exhibited on an improvised platform, formed in the entrails of a greengrocer's cart, on which the legend ran, "Gods carefully removed." Judging from the rabid specimens of abuse which were doled out by the oratory, it will be a God-send to Limehouse when these "good goods" are carefully removed to Colney Hatch.

The Secular meeting was very large and enthusiastic. The speakers were Messrs. Pack, Ramsey, Edwards, and Heaford. A collection was made for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund. In the afternoon the Freethinkers had a final demonstration on Peckham Rye. The audience was simply enormous in size, and evidenced by repeated cheers and hearty applause its appreciation of the arguments of the different speakers. Mr. Percy Ward led off, followed by Mr. Moss. The two other speakers were Messrs. Heaford and Pack. Interruptions, of course, there were, but these were kept within moderate bounds for fear of the police. The enthusiasm, the mirth, the good temper, and quick appreciation shown by the crowd made Sunday afternoon memorable.

The Camberwell Branch committee, on Sunday evening, passed a resolution thanking all their numerous supporters at Peckham Rye, with special mention of Messrs. Edwards and Loafer.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, his subject being "The Creed of a Rationalist." He had a good audience and a warm greeting.

A monument to the late Mathilde Blind, poetess and Freethinker, will be unveiled at St. Pancras Cemetery, Finchley, on Thursday, December 1—the second anniversary of her funeral—at 2.30 in the afternoon.

Our recent article on the *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* is noticed in an Anarchist journal called *Free Society*, which reaches us from San Francisco. This journal is one

of our exchanges, and we generally glance over its columns. It is conducted with some ability, and, we imagine, with some self-denial; and we are bound to respect men of conviction, however much we happen to differ from them. Our own view is that the Anarchist and the State Socialist are both mounted upon true principles, but each rides his principle to death. Life is the balance of many principles, not the expression of one.

Mr. Cohen is leaving London for a fortnight's lecturing tour in the provinces. Huddersfield friends are desired to note that he lectures on Monday evening at 7.30 in the Friendly Societies' Hall on "Morality without Religion."

We have received a most gratifying letter from a correspondent in the far north of England, whose name and address we withhold for obvious reasons. He is a photographer, and is called upon about four times a year by a traveller—"a man so upright and kindly that I felt sure that what he asked me to read could at least do me no harm." This gentleman gave him several copies of the *Freethinker*, which he read with avidity and profit. He had never really admired the Bible, and he found in this journal the reasons that had been unconsciously operating in his mind. He is now a much happier man than he ever was before, and looks forward with pleasure to his weekly copy of the *Freethinker*.

Mr. C. P. Farrell, Colonel Ingersoll's relative and publisher, writing to us from New York under date of Nov. 13, says: "I see by the *Freethinker* that you and Mr. Watts are doing all you can to civilise and humanise your people. I greatly enjoyed your articles on Shakespeare, Shelley, and Gladstone. To my mind you gave an absolutely true portrayal of Gladstone's intellect and character. The Colonel has not yet decided when he will get over the sea to you. I hope soon. The relations between England and America are growing so cordial that I predict a very warm reception for him when he does come. We all speak and think of you very often."

## WOMEN AND PRIESTS.

ONE of the commonest and, at the same time, most unwarranted claims made by parsons is that religion has tended to improve the position of women.

Martin Madam, D.D., in his defence of polygamy, entitled *Thelyphthora, or a Treatise on Female Ruin*, 1780, in the third volume gives a long list of the Fathers, quotations from their writings, and the various laws, canons, and edicts of councils from the first century.

The result of wading through these old-time writings is the feeling that mentally, morally, and physically these Fathers must have been badly in want of an Act such as was passed last session by the English Parliament empowering magistrates to forcibly apply insect powder, carbolic acid, or some other disinfectant to the foul creatures.

In the minds of all of them woman was something to be shunned and scorned. "Avoid the speech and society of the female sex as the contagion of a plague" was the constant message to men.

Virginity and chastity are the greatest recommendations to God. Since there was no other known way of making saints, monks, or popes than by the slow process of first making children, the making of children was permitted as a necessary evil. Some, however, went so far as to be logical enough to say that the early end of the world was preferable to the sin of procreation.

A modern echo of the old spirit has just been brought to light in the will of the Archimandrite Hieronymos Myriantheus.

The meek and lowly (?) owner of this tremendous polysyllabled title, like all the modern highly-placed followers of Christ, seems to have piled up some considerable treasure on earth, and, after disposing of it in various ways—one being the building of a tomb in Cyprus—he goes on to say:

"For the consideration of the Mother Church, whose ardent and faithful servant I have been, am, and shall be till my last breath, I consider it my duty to here record that a band of jealous and unscrupulous individuals invented some years ago, and has propagated against me, the infamous calumny that I had, so to speak, abjured my priesthood, and that I had married. I invoke the Omniscient God as my witness that I have not committed so horrible a crime either publicly or secretly. May a just Judge pass judgment on these cowardly assailants of my good reputation on the great and dreadful Day of Judgment."

Good old saint! Good old eunuch! Good old humbug!  
May you, like your seed, never rise again,  
T. S.



## SUPERSTITION.

EXTRACTS FROM COLONEL INGERSOLL'S NEW LECTURE.  
(Concluded from page 747.)

MILLIONS of men have wasted their lives in the study of this book, in trying to harmonise contradictions, and to explain the obscure and seemingly absurd. In doing this they have justified nearly every crime and every cruelty. In its follies they have found the profoundest wisdom. Hundreds of creeds have been constructed from its inspired passages. Probably no two of its readers have agreed as to its meaning. Thousands have studied Hebrew and Greek that they might read the Old and New Testaments in the languages in which they were written. The more they studied, the more they differed. By the same book they proved that nearly everybody is to be lost, and that all are to be saved; that slavery is a divine institution, and that all men should be free; that polygamy is right, and that no man should have more than one wife; that the powers that be are ordained of God, and that the people have a right to overturn and destroy the powers that be; that all the actions of men were predestined, preordained from eternity, and yet that man is free; that all the heathen will be lost; that all the heathen will be saved; that all men who live according to the light of nature will be damned for their pains; that you must be baptised by sprinkling; that you must be baptised by immersion; that there is no salvation without baptism; that baptism is useless; that you must believe in the Trinity; that it is sufficient to believe in God; that you must believe that a Hebrew peasant was God; that at the same time he was half man, that he was of the blood of David through his supposed father Joseph, who was not his father, and that it is not necessary to believe that Christ was God; that you must believe that the Holy Ghost proceeded; that it makes no difference whether you do or not; that you must keep the Sabbath holy; that Christ taught nothing of the kind; that Christ established a church; that he established no church; that the dead are to be raised; that there is to be no resurrection; that Christ is coming again; that he has made his last visit; that Christ went to hell and preached to the spirits in prison; that he did nothing of the kind; that all the Jews are going to perdition; that they are all going to heaven; that all the miracles described in the Bible were performed; that some of them were not, because they are foolish, childish, and idiotic; that all the Bible is inspired; that some of the books are not inspired; that there is to be a general judgment, when the sheep and goats are to be divided; that there never will be any general judgment; that the sacramental bread and wine are changed into the flesh and blood of God and the Trinity; that they are not changed; that God has no flesh or blood; that there is a place called "purgatory"; that there is no such place; that unbaptised infants will be lost; that they will be saved; that we must believe the Apostles' Creed; that the apostles made no creed; that the Holy Ghost was the father of Christ; that Joseph was his father; that the Holy Ghost had the form of a dove; that there is no Holy Ghost; that heretics should be killed; that you must not resist evil; that you should murder unbelievers; that you must love your enemies; that you should take no thought for the morrow, but should be diligent in business; that you should lend to all who ask, and that one who does not provide for his own household is worse than an infidel.

In defence of all these creeds, all these contradictions, thousands of volumes have been written, millions of sermons have been preached, countless swords reddened with blood, and thousands and thousands of nights made lurid with the fagot's flames.

### AN OUTGROWN DEITY.

In our day Jehovah has been outgrown. He is no longer the perfect. Now theologians talk, not about Jehovah, but about a God of love, call him the Eternal Father and the perpetual friend and providence of man. But, while they talk about this God of love, cyclones wreck and rend, the earthquake devours, the flood destroys, the red bolt leaping from the cloud still crashes the life out of men, and plague and fever still are tireless reapers in the harvest fields of death.

They tell us now that all is good; that evil is but blessing in disguise, that pain makes strong and virtuous

men—makes character—while pleasure enfeebles and degrades. If this be so, the souls in hell should grow to greatness, while those in heaven should shrink and shrivel.

All the orthodox churches are obstructions on the highway of progress. Every orthodox creed is a chain, a dungeon. Every believer in the "inspired book" is a slave who drives reason from her throne, and in her stead crowns fear.

Reason is the light, the sun of the brain. It is the compass of the mind, the ever-constant Northern Star, the mountain peak that lifts itself above all clouds.

### THE AGNOSTIC.

After all we know but little. In the darkness of life there are a few gleams of light. Possibly the dropping of a dishcloth prophesies the coming of company, but we have no evidence. Possibly it is dangerous for thirteen to dine together, but we have no evidence. Possibly a maiden's matrimonial chances are determined by the number of seeds in an apple, or by the number of leaves on a flower, but we have no evidence. Possibly certain stones give good luck to the wearer, while the wearing of others brings loss and death. Possibly a glimpse of the new moon over the left shoulder brings misfortune. Possibly there are curative virtues in old bones, in sacred rags and holy hairs, in images and bits of wood, in rusty nails and dried blood, but the trouble is we have no evidence. Possibly comets, eclipses, and shooting stars foretell the death of kings, the destruction of nations, or the coming of plague. Possibly devils take possession of the bodies and minds of men. Possibly witches, with the devil's help, control the winds, breed storms on sea and land, fill summer's lap with frosts and snow, and work with charm and spell against the public weal; but of this we have no evidence. It may be that all the miracles described in the Old and New Testament were performed; that the pallid flesh of the dead felt once more the thrill of life; that the corpse arose and felt upon his smiling lips the kiss of wife and child. Possibly water was turned into wine, loaves and fishes increased, and possibly devils were expelled from men and women; possibly fishes were found with money in their mouths; possibly clay and spittle brought back the light to sightless eyes, and possibly words cured disease and made the leper clean; but of this we have no evidence.

### IT MAY BE.

Possibly iron floated, rivers divided, waters burst from dry bones, birds carried food to prophets, and angels flourished drawn swords; but of this we have no evidence.

Possibly Jehovah employed lying spirits to deceive a king, and all the wonders of the savage world may have happened; but the trouble is, there is no proof.

So there may be a devil, almost infinite in cunning and power, and he may have a countless number of imps whose only business is to sow the seeds of evil and to vex, mislead, capture, and imprison in eternal flames the souls of men. All this, so far as we know, is possible. All we know is, that we have no evidence except the assertions of ignorant priests.

Possibly there is a place called "hell," where all the devils live—a hell whose flames are waiting for all the men who think and have the courage to express their thoughts, for all who fail to credit priests and sacred books, for all who walk the path that reason lights, for all the good and brave who lack credulity and faith; but of this, I am happy to say, there is no proof.

And so there may be a place called "heaven," the home of God, where angels float and fly and play on harps and hear with joy the groans and shrieks of the lost in hell; but of this there is no evidence.

It all rests on dreams and visions of the insane.

There may be a power superior to nature—a power that governs and directs all things; but the existence of this power has not been established.

In the presence of the mysteries of life and thought, of force and substance, of growth and decay, of birth and death, of joy and pain, of the sufferings of the good, the triumphs of wrong, the intelligent, honest man is compelled to say: "I do not know."

But we do know how gods and devils, heavens and hells, have been made. We know the history of inspired books—the origin of religions. We know how the seeds of superstition were planted, and what made them grow. We know that all superstitions, all creeds, all follies and



mistakes, all crimes and cruelties, all virtues, vices, hopes, and fears, all discoveries and inventions, have been naturally produced. By the light of reason we divide the useful from the hurtful, the false from the true.

We know the past—the paths that man has travelled—his mistakes, his triumphs. We know a few facts, a few fragments; and the imagination, the artist of the mind, with these facts, these fragments, rebuilds the past, and, on the canvas of the future, deftly paints the things to be.

### THE MURDER OF HAROLD FREDERIC.

BIG-HEARTED, big-brained, big-muscled, open-handed Harold Frederic, the sanest of European correspondents, one of the most delightful of story-tellers, the earnest and kindly student of his fellow men, the novelist, politician, sociological expert, is dead—dead because of this murderous modern fad, which its idiotic devotees call "Christian Science." He was sick, of course, when he became its adherent. His mentality unclouded by disease would have laughed its meretricious pretensions to scorn. Because of the ravages of his ailment, he possessed no longer his clarity of vision; but his will-power was left, his dominating personality, his obstinacy. He insisted, with a sick man's unshakeable clinging to a belief, that he be left alone, and there was near him no one of his old companions to take a club and chase the "healers" into the street, or throw them downstairs and land them afterwards in jail, where they belong, and all of their kind belong.

A truly great man and a lovable man has gone into the night. He has been done to death by these mumbling mummies as surely as if they had struck fifty daggers through his heart. Nothing will be done with them. The crime is theirs, but there is no punishment for it under the inadequate American or English law. A man is still given the right to choose his own physicians, and the machinery for the restraint or direction of those mentally incapable of choosing wisely has not been so far perfected that suicide through "Christian Science" can be prevented. Only a simple statute is needed, however. This statute should declare guilty of murder any gang of men or women who approach a sick bed, drive away legally authorized physicians, and then pray their victim into the tomb. A graduate of an authorized medical college, if guilty of malpractice, can be convicted of malpractice. It appears that we have no law to reach these malpractitioners, who ought to be confined for life when death results, and placed in the penitentiary for five years when their patient happens to fight through. Never in the history of their "Science" have its "professors" cured anybody of anything, saving hypochondriacs, who had nothing the matter with them. All of the "Christian Scientists" between the poles, herded into a single field and told to yelp prayers like a tormented terrier, could not cure a man of a pimple on the nose.

The Harold Frederic murder has attracted especial attention because of the victim's especial prominence; but the long list of people done to death by these fools within the past ten years would reach from New York to St. Petersburg. Not a day passes but some valuable human being breathes his or her last while the couch is surrounded by muttering imbeciles, who imagine that the Deity has nothing better to do than to spend all his hours in curing rheumatism of the second joint of the middle finger, diarrhoea from green apples, and toothache because the sufferer has been too lazy to use a brush with regularity, or too stingy to pay a dentist.

—*Braniff's "Iconoclast" (Chicago.)*

### Obituary.

We much regret to record the death of Mrs. Ellen Forder, wife of Mr. Robert Forder. The sad event took place on Sunday morning last (Nov. 20). The deceased lady had only been ill for a few days, but on the Friday night an operation became necessary, and in about twenty-four hours she had ceased to live. Happily, her last hours were without pain. Mrs. Forder was the daughter of an old Woolwich Freethinker. She was forty years of age, but looked much younger. Mr. Forder will have the sympathy of very many friends in this sudden and painful bereavement. We are asked to state that the funeral is arranged to take place at Finchley Cemetery on Saturday afternoon (Nov. 26) at 3 o'clock. Mr. Foote has promised to officiate at the burial.

### INGERSOLL THE MAN AND ORATOR.

[The following paragraphs are extracted from a long article by Herman E. Kittredge in the *Medical Brief*, an important and widely-circulated magazine published at St. Louis, and edited by Dr. J. J. Lawrence.]

SEEN and heard in his wonted rôle upon the lecture platform, Ingersoll is not to be forgotten. His splendid physique—tall and erect, with broad and massive shoulders supporting a perfectly-shaped head—is worthy of admiration, while his mode of entry, in a calmness amounting almost to indifference, and his manner of plunging abruptly into the subject, are characteristically, if not distinctively, Ingersollian. Everything is said and done just as Ingersoll says and does it, and, were we to judge from even nothing more than a comparison of his audiences with those of other lecturers, we should have to conclude that no one has yet been able to show the public a better or a more fascinating way. To his merited praise let it be said, in passing, that the Colonel has not, in even his driest moments, been guilty of the wearisome habit of pausing during a discourse to moisten a defective vocal apparatus by resorting to the usual and unsightly pitcher and glass. Apparently, he knows no fatigue, while his remarkable voice—rich, melodious, and as deep as the theme that gives it birth—carries every syllable full and rounded to "the gallery of the gods." It is said, however, that, quite naturally, it has not the charm it possessed in 1876; for instance, when, in the Cincinnati Convention, it told in undying simile of the "armed warrior" and the "plumed knight," or when, at Indianapolis, several months later, it painted that which is acknowledged to be the truest, the sublimest war picture ever produced without canvas or brush—"A Vision of War."

Of the many laudable traits in the character of the great Agnostic, absolute honesty and perfect candor most deeply impress his hearers. "Let's be honest," "I do not know," and similar expressions, are some of the crevices through which shines out the splendor of his soul. He is apt to impress the stranger as one who believes himself to be equal to the occasion, and it may be truthfully added that all who have experienced the magic spell which Ingersoll only can throw about an audience, or who have followed him to "the dim heights of thought" in any of the written controversies to which he has been a party, agree that whatever self-confidence he may possess is excusable.

However incongruous or improbable it may appear to some who do not accept his philosophy, or who have, it may be, failed adequately to comprehend it, Ingersoll is nothing if not an ardent champion of the fireside. Those who have not already learned this through their good fortune to see him in his magnificent home, amid "the love of wife and child and friend," will find most touching and beautiful evidences of it in all his works.

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If there is any other characteristic of Ingersoll that merits comparison with his candor or his incredulity, any trait that has played an equal part in the upbuilding of his reputation, it is benevolence. His charity is of the most unselfish form—the result of mentally putting himself in the place of others. Among his neighbors, past and present, wherever he has lived, whether in Shawneetown (Illinois), where he and his brother Ebon first commenced the practice of law, or in Peoria, Washington, or New York, anecdotes of "Bob" Ingersoll's charity are as common as the tale of George Washington and his hatchet is familiar. It is said that no worthy person or cause ever appealed to him in vain. His numerous gifts and contributions to needy individuals and to societies, both charitable and intellectual, are widely known. How many similar ones have been made without the knowledge of the public, his modesty in such matters precludes the possibility of discovering,

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Ingersoll has never been found wandering in the maze of metaphysics. He is satisfied as to the limitations of the mind—where the known stops and the unknown begins—and in defence of his position he produces arguments as easily as a laden tree in autumn sheds its ripened fruit.

Of expression he knows every grace, and in his pictures logic, wit, humor, and pathos blend with all the harmony of "divided light." Everything is natural—spontaneous. In the mirror of his genius Nature smiling looks, and we receive her image—perfect, and fresh as the dewy morning. In his eloquence are the wild fury of the storm—the white-capped anger of the sea—the snow-crowned peak—the perfumed and sunny fields—the delicious solitude of the shady wood, in which, perhaps, the songs of birds mingle with the dreamy murmur of a brook. Between his style and the style of most other speakers is the difference between oratory and elocution. At his feet all artists pay the tribute of their admiration. But to convey by a few brief quotations a true estimate of the orator, or to give an adequate written description of the man, is as impossible as to tell the composition of a mountain by examining a fragment of its rock. Ingersoll must be seen and heard.



When you do not know, to admit it—that is honesty; to express your real thoughts, knowing that the scorn and hatred of the majority will be your lot—that is courage; to love humanity, "to give to every other human being every right that you claim for yourself," to put justice above all else—that is goodness; in the world of thought to see always the purpling dawn; to walk alone; to bring from fancy's painted realm new poems, new pictures, which ennoble and delight—that is genius. Robert G. Ingersoll has all of these.

## BOOK CHAT.

MARK TWAIN, in the *Forum*, makes an appeal for tragedy. We are all too fond of comedy and farce, he says; in short, he harks back to the view of Aristotle that tragedy elevates and purifies by terror and pity. This is Mark Twain's conclusion: "Comedy keeps the heart sweet; but we all know that there is wholesome refreshment for both mind and heart in an occasional climb among the solemn pomps of the intellectual snow-summits built by Shakespeare and those others. Do I seem to be preaching? It is out of my line; I only do it because the rest of the clergy seem to be on vacation."

It appears that F. C. Barnard, the editor of *Punch*, was educated as a priest. The secret is out at last. We have often wondered why the humor of our contemporary was so deadly dull.

This paper suffers from the Press boycott. This has, however, never prevented rival editors from stealing our ideas. Our esteemed contributor, "Mimnermus," has published in our columns a series of "Prehistoric Peeps." A recent "Peep" was entitled "The First Policeman." A fortnight later *Pick-Me-Up* paid us the compliment of publishing an imitation—"Prehistory: The First Policeman." We apologise to the editor of *Pick-Me-Up* for having dared to anticipate his thoughts in this way.

It is worth noting that the present issue of the *Secular Almanack* is the thirtieth. For thirty years this publication has regularly made its appearance. This is not a bad record for a dying organisation.

The *Secular Almanack* is a most useful publication, as it gives in a handy form all the needful information concerning the work of organised Freethought in this and all other countries, besides containing a number of bright articles by leading Freethinkers. By handing a copy to a friend each of our readers would do the cause a real service.

*Do You Believe the Bible is the Word of God?* is the question asked at the top of an anonymous eight-page tract published by Watts & Co., London. There is nothing to indicate whether it is for sale or private circulation. It is well-written, and should set Christian readers thinking.

### "The Same Old Story."

Such is the heading in a *Secular* paper of the failure of the First National Bank of Ohio. A few days ago the cashier, who was very active in church work, simply sloped. "It is believed," says the *News Dispatch*, "that investigation will bring his defalcations up to \$100,000." This is another exemplification of the divine command, "Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." One hundred thousand dollars will go a long way in that direction.—*Progressive Thinker*.

I was in Melbourne Picture Gallery on the day the painting of "Chloe" was hung. The space opposite the picture was occupied by half-circles of chairs, and these again by society dames and baldheads. One decrepit old gent, shaking with palsy and mouthing silently and horribly, was helped up the gallery to a seat by a fat, ferocious-looking dowager in blue goggles, and there he sat trembling and winking his wicked, watery old eyes at the innocent naked girl in front. Close to me at the far side, beneath "The Brigands," were two young parsons, one gloating over Chloe through a pair of opera-glasses! Said his friend: "Are you not exceeding youah allowance?" The other relinquished the glasses with a sigh. They were each having five-minute pops. And all this disgusting behavior over the figure of a fourteen-year-old girl! And by such sexual wrecks was "Chloe" condemned as "indecent"! Ugh!—*Sydney Bulletin*.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### FLAGELLOMANIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am at a loss to see the connection between flogging a criminal, who doesn't like it, and the vices referred to by Mr. Collinson; or why, because priests have flogged women lawlessly, that the law shouldn't flog by its duly-accredited agents those who commit crimes of violence, including the aforesaid priests.

However, I am at one with Mr. Collinson that flogging is an inexpedient punishment, except in sparsely settled or new communities. But the British public have got it in their heads that flogging has been beneficial in garroting, and, between the lines of all that Mr. Collinson has written against flogging he has admitted that the British public are right.

There are no greater sufferers in this world than advanced reformers from a lax administration of justice, and the law, aggravated by the atrocious custom of our judges and magistrates of treating crimes of violence, unless accompanied with robbery, as venial offences, is just one of those artful arrangements that plays into the hands of priests, aristocrats, and tyrants generally.

Your columns last week showed the case of a parson who knocked a working man about fearfully, and was let off with a fine of forty shillings; and such cases are of constant occurrence. Such a case as that is not, however, where we propagandists of advanced ideas suffer. Mr. Collinson must be perfectly aware that there are hundreds of places in England where the right of free speech is a farce, as the Peckham Rye ruffians are trying to make it in South London. Take the case of the Oxford riots a year or two back; surely instead of the forty shilling fine a minimum of twenty pounds would not have been too much for the really ruffianly undergraduates.

I am quite certain that fines, if heavy enough, would be a sufficient deterrent, accompanied by a fairly severe alternative of imprisonment; but if the Humanitarian League, contrary to their professed principles, persist in simply attacking the demand for flogging, instead of at the same time earnestly pushing an alternative scheme, and refuse the membership and subscription of persons like myself, who have pushed them hard in what I consider their shortcomings, then they will perhaps have the mortification of seeing those they call flagellomaniacs successful.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

In the vicinity of Galston there is an interesting old candidate for one of those old-age pensions when they happen to arrive. He is an old collier, who, after half a century's faithful service underground, is doing his best to enjoy what remains of his life in the open. He is an inveterate smoker, and on bright days is invariably to be found by the roadside with his pipe going full steam. The other day a well-meaning tract distributor discovered the old fellow sitting by the roadside at his favorite pastime. "Do you think you are a Christian?" asked the distributor of Christian literature of the old man. "I expect sae at onyrate," he replied. "Do you expect to go to heaven?" the man next asked. "If I can," said the old fellow. "But the Bible says nothing unclean shall enter there. Now, the breath of the smoker is unclean. What do you say to that, friend?" "Weel," answered the old man, resenting these repeated queries; "weel, I reckon I mun jist leave a' men o' ye're stamp ahint me when I get there, that's a'." It was enough.

I mark the sable ironclad  
In every sea; in every land,  
An army idling on the chain  
Of rusty peace that chafes and frets  
Its seven-leagued limbs, and bristling mane  
Of glittering bayonets;  
The glowing blast, the fire-shot smoke  
Where guns are forged and armor-plate;  
The mammoth hammer's pounding stroke;  
The din of our dread iron date.  
And always divers undertones  
Within the roaring tempest throb—  
The chink of gold, the laborer's groans,  
The infant's wail, the woman's sob.  
Hoarsely they beg of fate to give  
A little lightening of their woe,  
A little time to love, to live,  
A little time to think and know.

—John Davidson.

We are all equal in the sight of the Devil.—*Life*.



## 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, "Christian Science, the Peculiar People, and the Dying Faith."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Lyric Musical Comedy Co., "A Japanese Idyll."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, E. Pack, "An Hour with Lecky."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, H. H. Quilter, "Seneca and Paul."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "Plato on the Love of Justice."

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, E. Calvert, "Religious Symbolism"

WEST LONDON BRANCH (15 Edgware-road): December 1, at 8.15, Mr. Marriott, "Secularism, Socialism, and the Reformation."

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): Every evening 7-10.50.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "St. Paul on the Love of Christ."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture.

DEPTFORD (Broadway): 6.30, C. James, "Christ and Democracy."

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): Charles Watts—11, "Secular Power of Philology"; 7, "The Bible: Past, Present, and Future."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Dramatic Entertainment—"Fish Out of Water," also "Family Jars."

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, Debate between Messrs. W. Gough Tunley and H. McGuinness, "Liberalism v. Socialism."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 and 6.30, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner.

HALIFAX (Public Hall): November 28, at 7.30, J. M. Robertson, "Imperialism v. Social Reform."

HUDDERSFIELD (Friendly and Trade Societies' Club, Northumberland-street): November 28, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Morality without Religion."

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall): 7, Lincoln Billany, "An Interesting Reading."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. Brandon Medland, "Photography up to Date." Illustrated.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): H. Percy Ward—11, "Shall we Live After Death?" 3, "The New Woman and the Old Man"; 7, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secular Platform."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen—11, "Herbert Spencer: I. Religion and Philosophy"; 3, "After Christianity What?" 7 "Christianity and the Jews."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Evenings' Musical and other Recitals, etc.

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

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—November 27, Manchester; 28, Huddersfield. November 30 and December 1, Failsforth. December 4, Manchester; 5 and 6, Blackburn; 7, 8, and 9, Derby; 11, Stockton-on-Tees.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—November 27, North Camberwell Radical Club.

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

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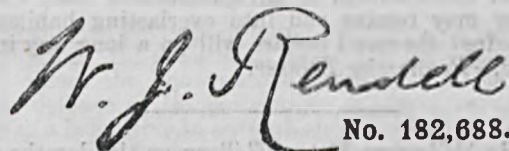
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