

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XIX.—No. 12.

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 1899.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

Fighting on Sunday.

NOTHING on earth could exceed the humbug of the clerical profession. Ministers of religion dress, look, act, and talk differently from other men. Indeed, it has been asked whether they *are* men. The witty, irreverent Rev. Sydney Smith, who knew his own cloth as well as anybody, once said there were three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. Still, they give some evidence of masculinity in Protestant countries, where they at least marry early and breed freely; while in Catholic countries they are debarred from matrimony, and left to play cuckoo to the rest of the male population. Consequently there is rather less cant amongst the Catholic priesthood. The vow of abstinence from general amusements. Under that vow a priest is so devoted to God—that is to say, to the Church—that he is obviously a Levite under all circumstances. But the Protestant minister, with his frequently large wife and often larger family, is so much like other men who are husbands and fathers that he is obliged to put on professional airs in all companies, in order to keep people in constant remembrance of his being really a Levite, notwithstanding certain appearances to the contrary. A Catholic priest will drink a glass, crack a joke, and even kiss a pretty girl; whereas the Protestant minister feels it incumbent upon him, at least in public, to look as grave as a candidate for damnation, to forswear recreations, to eschew frivolities, to patronise teetotalism, to hide his pipe or cigar, to regard the softer sex as angels rather than women, and to talk always on all matters with clerical affectation. Ask a Catholic priest what o'clock it is, and he tells you like any other man would; ask a Protestant minister, and his reply sounds like a quotation from a sermon.

Now this cant of the Protestant men of God, in particular, is so well worked into them that it expresses itself in all sorts of directions. A Catholic priest, for instance, is satisfied if you give a certain part of Sunday—say the morning—to your religious devotions, leaving all the rest of the day for change and amusement. But a Protestant minister, especially in puritan England and still more puritan America, is never satisfied while you have a single hour to yourself. He wants to make everybody miserable on the Lord's Day, unless happiness can be found at church or chapel, in listening to neyed exhortations. Trains, road vehicles, yachts and steamers, must be kept as still as possible; museums, art galleries, and public libraries must be closed; and concerts and lectures, if permitted at all, must not be allowed under paying conditions. All this, of course, simply means that the Protestant men of God want Sunday all to themselves, that they detest competition, and are close trade protectionists. Nevertheless, they will do anything rather than avow their real motives. They pretend to be acting for our good, instead of their own; and call every inroad upon their Sunday privileges a desecration of God's holy Sabbath. They feel that they are losing good business, but they say that we are losing our immortal souls.

Let it be observed, however, that a man may go on canting until he imposes upon himself. Was it not Carlyle who said that no one was ever a thorough-paced liar until he believed his own lies? Being self-deceived, he is a more successful deceiver. Now something of the same sort happens to the clergy in regard to Sabba-

tarianism. They have canted so much and so long that they have acquired a certain momentum, and must keep on doing it. How otherwise can we account for the conduct of the American clergy, particularly the Presbyterians, in connection with the late war with Spain? They did not denounce the war itself, for their country stood to gain by it—if empire *is* a gain. Like our English clergy, they keep their denunciations of war for occasions when their country stands to gain little, and to lose a great deal, by breaking the peace. What they did was this—they begged President McKinley to give orders to all admirals and generals not to do any fighting on a Sunday. Being a statesman, or at any rate a politician, President McKinley did not take this pious tip. When it comes to fighting, you have to make the most of every advantage. You must keep your eye right on the main chance. That is what President Lincoln thought when a religious deputation waited upon him with a view to inducing him to rebuke General Grant for drinking whiskey. Whiskey or no whiskey, Grant was going ahead and winning battles; so Lincoln quietly asked the deputation if they knew what brand of the liquor Grant affected. They replied that they didn't know. "Well," said Lincoln, "I thought, if you did know, that I would send on a few kegs to the other generals."

Curiously the Yankee ministers' advice was acted upon under the law of contraries. Instead of *not* fighting on a Sunday, the Yankee commanders did *all* their most important fighting on that very day. Dewey smashed the Spanish fleet at Manila on a Sunday; Cervera's squadron was smashed off Santiago on a Sunday; and Santiago itself surrendered on a Sunday. It was really too bad. No wonder the men of God were thrown into the mumps. They might just as well retire from business altogether as be flouted in this astounding fashion.

After chewing the cud for some months, amidst bitter reflections, the Yankee ministers have returned to the charge. Once more they beg President McKinley to give orders that, in case of any future warfare, the Yankee commanders are to avoid a battle on Sunday. Even if the enemy show a coming-on disposition, the Yankee commanders should (the men of God say) put them off somehow, and induce them to wait till Monday morning. Both sides, presumably, would spend the Lord's Day in prayer; in which case we don't envy the Lord's dilemma on the morrow. How on earth—or on sea, for that matter—is he to answer both praying parties? Probably he wouldn't try to. His usual method seems to be one of strict neutrality. He lets the strongest side win, but doesn't mind taking credit for the result, as the losing side has few friends. Napoleon saw this clearly enough, and he knew what he was talking about when the subject was fighting. "Providence," he said, "is always on the side of the big battalions."

One wonders, on the whole, at the folly of these Yankee ministers. It is easy enough over there to send Adventists to prison for keeping the Jewish Sabbath and attending to their affairs on the Christian Sunday. People will sacrifice truth, common-sense, and humanity to religious fanaticism, even in so-called civilised countries. But they will not sacrifice themselves. And the war-spirit, when it is fairly aroused, is deeper than religion. When his blood is well up, man sees nothing but his enemy, and goes for him in spite of God and Devil: yes, and in spite of the Church and Sunday too.

G. W. FOOTE.

Destructive Secularism.

A STUDY of controversial methods impresses one with the large part played therein by question-begging epithets. In the political world their name is legion, and in ethical and social matters they are little less numerous. Indeed, one may fairly assert that the adoption of a political or social label is as often a mark of the absence of definite thinking as the ascription of a label to an opponent is the result of a sheer disinclination to subject his views to a careful examination. It is so much more difficult to subject an opposing view of life to a careful examination than to brush it on one side with a contemptuous epithet; the mass of the people, moreover, take to a word so quickly, particularly if it has the quality of "catchiness," that both interest and indolence unite in making mere epithets do the duty of elaborate reasoning.

It was not to be expected that Secularism, and particularly the Secular Society, should escape being made the subject of epithets of this character; and with Christians anxious to brush it on one side as being worthless, and semi-Rationalists eager to pass as superior to the ordinary Freethinker, it is quite common to hear Secularism spoken of as being purely destructive in character. It is probable that few of those who use the phrase ask themselves what they really mean by it, or if they mean anything at all, with the majority its only recommendation being that it is already in use.

So far as the Christian is concerned, it may be allowed that there is a certain amount of reason in his using the phrase. So long as he believes in Christianity, he reasonably regards Secularism as destroying much that he considers good and truthful; and, although his survey of Secularism may be inadequate, still it must represent to him a force that is largely destructive, and that in an evil sense. It is when we find those who claim to have rejected Christianity making use of the same phrase, speaking of Secularism as "purely destructive" or of themselves as "purely constructive," that one wonders what can be meant by such expressions.

Is it meant that these people refrain from attacking Christianity altogether? If so, one may reasonably inquire how it is hoped to build up the higher life of which so much is said, without destroying the supernatural beliefs embodied in the current creed? It certainly shows anything but wisdom to imagine that naturalism and supernaturalism can exist side by side on terms of amity. Every advance of naturalism is so much territory won from its rival; and it is a simple impossibility to build up a scheme of life based upon the natural knowledge of man and his relations without attacking those supernaturalistic ideas that stand in the way of such a development. Or is it meant that by preaching the importance of ethics, or the value of life independent of all theological considerations, people will be led to reject Christianity, while Secularism, by directly attacking it, does but rouse people's ardor in its defence? I do not wish to discuss this view of the matter at this juncture, but if we grant as much it follows that the self-styled "constructives" are really more iconoclastic than the much-belabored Secularists, the difference being one of method only. So that we are ultimately brought to this position: either the non-Christians who make use of such phrases are not carrying out the work they pretend to be doing, or they are blaming Secularists for a fault of which they themselves are guilty to a much greater degree. Perhaps, however, one would not be very wide of the mark in attributing such language to a parrot-like repetition of Christian phrases allied to a constitutional timidity at avowing opinions altogether at variance with the public opinion.

But to return to the Christian, who, as I have said, is the only one who can speak of "destructive Secularism" with even a pretence of justification. And even here the phrase is misleading, inasmuch as it not only concentrates attention upon one aspect of Secularism to the exclusion of all others, but fails to take into consideration the fact that, however destructive the work of Freethought may be, it is destructive in the name of a new and better synthesis of society, and not in that of a blind iconoclasm.

There are few people to-day who, on looking over the negations of the last 150 years, would deny that these

negations were the harbingers of a better and saner view of life and its duties. Every attack on the established religion has had, as a reason for its existence, the perception that the removal of Christianity was a necessary precursor of a better condition of existence. Those who aimed at destroying the supernatural in morals did so because they found it blinding man to the true meaning of right and wrong, branding virtues as vices, and labelling vices as virtues, dwarfing his nature, and keeping him in intellectual leading-strings throughout the whole of his existence. It was because a few people realised that, so long as people chained themselves to such a brutalising conception as the Christian doctrine of hell, it was bound to react disastrously on human nature; it was because of the realisation of this truth that the attempt was made to sweep it outside the circle of civilised life. It is true that a person may hold, and many do hold, contradictory beliefs; but each character is, after all, an organic whole; and an absurd or immoral belief, if sincerely held, is bound to influence the whole of one's opinions and actions. Underlying all the attacks that have been made on religious beliefs is the conviction that, if these beliefs are sincerely held, their influence on conduct is such as to render their destruction a necessary preliminary to the establishment of healthier opinions.

I have said that the Christian can only justify his position by fixing his attention on but one side of Secular activity. To see this clearly one has merely to remember that whether we call a doctrine destructive or constructive depends entirely upon the point of view from which we criticise it. In actual life all destructive work makes for construction, and all construction involves destruction. We will take each of these aspects in its order.

The four greatest scientific generalisations of the last three centuries—the Copernican system of astronomy, the Newtonian law of universal gravitation, the nebular hypothesis, and the law of evolution—were, from one point, the four most destructive agencies in all history. By the first, the system of cosmogony upon which the whole scheme of Christianity rested was completely destroyed. The earth, hitherto regarded as the centre of the universe, was reduced to a mere speck amidst an infinity of worlds, and man's cosmic importance was practically shattered. By the second, the multitude of spirits and angels that guided the planets and regulated the movements of matter were banished, and the grounds of a mechanical explanation of physical nature established. By the third, the agency of deity was excluded from the origin and development of the solar system. God, as Laplace said, was not necessary to the hypothesis, and for the future it was left for special apologists to find in astronomy a deity that astronomers themselves had failed to discover. And by the promulgation of the law of evolution these principles were not only deepened and strengthened, but were applied to the whole phenomena of animal and human life, thus destroying at one blow the last stronghold of supernaturalism. Thus each of these epoch-making generalisations was profoundly destructive, and if one were to label the men associated with their inception as "Destructives," thus ignoring the positive side of their teaching, one would only be acting as those who, leaving out of sight the constructive aspect of Secular propaganda, sneer at it as being "purely destructive."

And one has only to reverse these illustrations to show that, while from one point of view these things were destructive, from another point of view they were supremely constructive. Upon them has been built up all that is truly great in the intellectual life of the present; so that whether we call a teaching destructive or constructive depends upon whether we choose to contemplate its influence on existing beliefs and customs, or on the life of the future. Whether those who are struggling for a better condition of things emphasize the destructive or constructive side must be determined by the circumstances that surround us. There are occasions when it is wise to lay more stress upon one aspect of our propaganda than another; but it can never be wise to ignore one side altogether. For it is not only our task to capture assent to a plausible presentment of the value of life, humanly considered, but our duty so to train the mind as to guard against a recurrence of those superstitious beliefs that have been

such powerful forces for evil in the history of the race. How is this task to be accomplished if we studiously refrain from directly attacking the pretensions of the current theology? Surely it is not open for anyone, in the face of the millions annually spent upon religion, with the country in arms over the intellectually ridiculous question of Ritualism, to argue that there is no necessity for attacking Christianity. So long as it exists there is a necessity for attack, and the more plausible its exterior becomes the more essential it is that the few who discern its real nature shall slacken none of their efforts to destroy its influence. And is there not, moreover, something intellectually degrading in the picture of a Freethinker whose ultimate object is the destruction of Christianity, and who yet refrains from saying so in as many words. It may be "politic" occasionally to refrain from expressing one's ultimate object; but there must always be something intellectually lowering in such behavior.

And even if it were possible to pursue a thoroughly destructive policy—even if a class of people devoted their whole energies to the destruction of what they believed to be untrue, even then it would still be a good work. It may be true that the destruction of error does not add anything to the *positive* knowledge of man; but, at least, it serves the not unimportant purpose of preparing his mind for its acquisition. A person seeking lodgings for the night will not find them from being assured that there is no hotel in a particular direction; but the negative information thus gained at least enables him to spend his energies in a more hopeful manner. And in the same manner, although the mere destruction of the belief in providence or the efficacy of prayer may not teach man how to conduct his life, still, by insisting on the uselessness of these beliefs, greater opportunities are given for the direction of human energies into more profitable channels.

In this direction, if in no other, destructive work possesses a value not to be ignored in the evolution of thought. One need only reflect upon the extent to which false beliefs command man's attention, absorb his energies, and distort his judgment to realise how essential their removal is if a sane and sober view of life is to prevail. It is useless saying, Show man the truth and he will reject his errors. It is just the presence of these errors which prevent him seeing in which direction the truth lies. And it is they who, from motives of false delicacy or intellectual timidity omit to point out the bearing of new discoveries upon existing beliefs who fail to play the more helpful part in the development of the race.

C. COHEN.

The Number of Israelites who went Down to Egypt.

IN Genesis xlvi. is given a list of the names of the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Jacob, who are said to have gone with that patriarch to Egypt. In verse 8 we read: "And these are the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt." Then follows the list of the names, after which it is stated:—

"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were three-score and six" (xlvi. 26).

Omitting Er and Onan, who are said to have died in Canaan, and also Joseph and his two sons, who, according to the Biblical account, were already in Egypt, the number, without reckoning Jacob himself, is exactly sixty-six, as the writer of Genesis states. Also, in order that there might be no possible doubt upon the matter, the same writer, in the next verse, when including Joseph and his two sons and the patriarch Jacob, says:—

"All the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were three-score and ten."

There cannot be the smallest doubt, then, that the sixty-six persons whose names are given are represented as accompanying Jacob to Egypt. The list does not include any of Jacob's sons' wives, they not being his offspring; but the daughters and the granddaughters are reckoned with the others.

In Acts vii. 14 it is stated:—

"And Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his kindred, three score and fifteen souls."

This discrepancy Bible commentators reconcile by asserting that the latter number includes the wives of nine of Jacob's sons, besides the sixty-six persons whose names are given in Genesis; and having thus, as they imagine, satisfactorily settled the matter, they appear to think that nothing more can be said as to the number who are alleged to have gone down to Egypt. In this, however, they are lamentably mistaken. For, setting aside the contradictory statement in the Acts, there are good reasons for believing that *the whole list of sixty-six names* is nothing less than a pure fabrication. And that such is undoubtedly the case I will now proceed to demonstrate.

In the first place, in this list of the posterity of Jacob there are but *two* females (Jacob's daughter Dinah and a granddaughter Serah) to *sixty-seven* males; yet we know from statistics that nearly the same number of each sex is born annually. In the next place, by comparing Gen. xlvi. with Num. xxvi. 5-50, and also with 1 Chron. ii., iv., vi., vii., etc., we find that not one of Jacob's twelve sons, who are represented as going with their wives and "little ones" to Egypt, had another child born during their long residence in that country.* According to various passages in the sacred narrative, eleven of these sons at the date of the immigration to Egypt were only between 39 and 45 years of age, while the twelfth was very much younger; also the only two of the sons whose ages at death are recorded are said to have lived to be 110 and 137 respectively. As to the matter of wives, with the example set by their father constantly before them, there is no reason for supposing that Jacob's sons restricted themselves to one wife, nor that they did not, like Abraham, take a second upon the death of the first. Yet, though these men were all in the prime of life, and lived more than half their days in Egypt, not one of the whole twelve had another son or daughter after entering that country. In other words, assuming the sojourning in Egypt to be a fact, all the offspring which these twelve men afterwards had, or were reputed to have had, are entered in the list as born before the immigration.

For proof of this fact we need only turn to Gen. xlv. 21. There, amongst those who are stated to have gone down with Jacob to Egypt, we find ten sons of Benjamin.

"And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard."

Now, in the earlier narrative of the brothers going to Egypt to buy corn, we read:—

"And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the *lad* with me, and we will arise and go" (Gen. xliii. 8).

The "*lad*" here spoken of was little Benjamin, the father's pet, whom Judah pledged his word to bring back safely from Egypt. Again, in the next chapter, in the simple and affecting speech addressed to the Egyptian governor, Judah is represented as saying:—

"My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a *child* of his old age, a *little one*.And we said unto my lord, The *lad* cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.....Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the *lad* be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the *lad's* life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the *lad* is not with us, that he will die" (xliv. 19-31).

It was upon this occasion that Joseph made himself known to his brethren and invited the whole family to come to Egypt, and then sent his brothers back to Canaan with wagons for the use of the women and children. The coming of Jacob into Egypt was, therefore, only a few days, or possibly weeks, after Judah's supplicatory address in which Benjamin is described as the child of Jacob's old age, and as a "*lad*" and "*a little one*." Yet this little *lad*, who lived at home with his father, is represented as having, at this time, a wife and ten sons.

But we have further proof of the fraud from the

* One name, Jochebed, is given in Num. xxvi. 59; but this can be shown to be an interpolation.

Hebrew books themselves. In Numbers and Chronicles are given three additional lists of the sons of Benjamin, and not one of them agrees with the catalogue in Genesis. Thus, in Num. xxvi. 38, Benjamin's sons are said to be: Bela, Ashbel, Ahiham, Shephupham, and Hupham; after which the writer adds, "And the sons of Bela were *Ard* and *Naaman*." Taking the names Ehi, Muppim, and Huppim, in Genesis, to be Ahiham, Shephupham, and Hupham in Numbers (as all commentators allow), it would appear that Benjamin had only five sons, and that *Ard* and *Naaman*—who are represented as his sons in Genesis—were his grandsons.

Again, in 1 Chron. viii. 1-2, the sons of Benjamin are stated to be: Bela, Ashbel, Aharah, Nohah, and Rapha; after which the writer says: "And Bela had sons, Addar, and Gera, and Abihud, and Abishua, and Naaman, and Ahoah, and Gera, and Shephupham, and Hiram." Here, again, Benjamin is credited with only five sons, two of whom are not found in Genesis or Numbers, while five of those stated in Genesis to be his sons—Addar (*Ard*), Gera, Naaman, Shephupham, and Hiram (Huppim)—are given as his grandsons.

Lastly, in 1 Chron. vii. 6-12 we have a third list which differs from all the others, at the end of which it is stated that "Shuppim also, and Huppim," were "the sons of Ir"—the last-named individual being another son of Bela. All these lists, be it remembered, are equally inspired—that is to say, we can place no more dependence upon one than upon another. Of course, if the lad Benjamin was too young to have been the father of ten sons at the going down into Egypt, he could not at that time have had grandsons and great-grandsons. We may, therefore, strike out of the list of immigrants to Egypt the ten sons of Benjamin.

Looking, next, at the six sons ascribed to Simeon in Genesis, we find that the writers of Numbers and of Chronicles agree in giving him only five, and that the compiler of Genesis has added one to their lists—*Ohad*. This name we may also safely erase.

We come, thirdly, to *Asher*. At the time of the immigration to Egypt *Asher* is stated to have had four sons and two grandsons (Gen. xvi. 17), the latter being sons of the fourth son, *Beriah*. *Asher* was born a year before Joseph, and, as the latter was thirty-nine years of age at the going down into Egypt, *Asher* was forty at that time. Putting his age on the day of his marriage at only twenty-one, he would be twenty-five, if not older, when his fourth son, *Beriah*, was born, and the latter would be a lad of fifteen when Jacob and his family removed to Egypt. Yet *Beriah* is stated to have been the father of two sons, *Heber* and *Malchiel*, at this time. We may therefore strike out the names of these alleged grandsons from the list in Genesis.

Lastly, we will examine the family of Judah. This patriarch was three years older than Joseph, and was therefore forty-two at the going down into Egypt. It will here be necessary to notice some of the exploits of Judah as recorded in Gen. xxxviii. There, we are told, this worthy man took to wife "a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was *Shua*," who bare him three sons in succession—*Er*, *Onan*, and *Sheelah*. When the eldest of these sons had reached manhood, Judah found him a wife named *Tamar*. "And *Er*, Judah's first born, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him." Judah then gave *Tamar* to his second son; but, for an act which this young man committed, the Lord "slew him also." "Then said Judah to *Tamar*, his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow in thy father's house till *Shelah*, my son, be grown up." With this request *Tamar* complied, but how long she remained a widow is not stated. It is, however, clearly implied that *Shelah* was several years younger than *Onan*. Bearing this in mind, we are told that "in process of time" *Tamar*, perceiving that "*Shelah* was grown up, and she was not given unto him to wife," covered herself with a veil and sat in the gate of *Enaim*, where Judah, seeing her, had intercourse with her. *Tamar* returned home, and in due time gave birth to twins, *Perez* and *Zerah*.

Now, amongst the names of those who are stated to have accompanied Jacob to Egypt are not only *Perez* and *Zerah*, but two sons of *Perez*—*Hezron* and *Hamul* (Gen. xlvi. 12). It is scarcely possible that *Perez* and *Zerah* could have been born at that time, but it is absolutely impossible that *Hezron* and *Hamul* could

also have then seen the light of day, as can be easily shown. Joseph is stated to have been seventeen years of age some time before he was sold into Egypt (Gen. xxxvii. 2), and must have been at least eighteen when that event took place. Consequently, Judah, who saw *Shua's* daughter *after* this affair, must have been over twenty-one when he married her, and not less than twenty-six when his third son, *Shelah*, was born. Judah would therefore be on his way to Egypt with the others when *Shelah* had reached his sixteenth year. Hence, unless this son could be said to be "grown up," and of a marriageable age at fourteen, there was no time for *Perez* and *Zerah* to be begotten and born in the land of *Canaan*; for *Tamar* is stated to have waited some time *after* *Shelah* had reached manhood before she played the harlot. *Tamar's* son *Perez* is, however, not only said to have been born before the immigration to Egypt, but this child is actually represented as *the father of two sons* at that time—which is sheer lunacy. The names of *Perez*, *Zerah*, *Hezron*, and *Hamul* may therefore be struck out of the list of Israelites born in *Canaan*.

Thus, without extending our examination farther, we find among the Bible list of immigrants to Egypt no less than seventeen persons who, according to the sacred narrative itself, could not have been born at that time. We have, consequently, the clearest proof of fabrication, and may estimate at their just value the inspired words, "And these are the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt." We are enabled, also, to test the accuracy of the statement in the Acts—that the number of Joseph's kindred was "three-score and fifteen souls"—as well as the alleged inspiration of the writer.

ABRACADABRA.

Charles Blount.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

(Concluded from page 171.)

IN 1680 appeared *Great is Diana of the Ephesians; or, The Original of Idolatry, together with the Politick Institution of the Gentiles Sacrifices*; an attack upon heathen superstition and priestcraft, with Jewish and Christian ditto read between the lines. For instance, he says:—

"Apollonius Tyanæus is reported by Philostratus to have raised a maid from the dead, but Reason questions whether the maid was not only asleep; for sleep is the image of death. Philostratus also foretelleth that Apollonius vanished away out of the Emperor's presence before a great number of people; but here Reason bids me observe that, although it is reported to have been done in the presence of a great number of people, yet I have but the testimony of one man for it—viz., Philostratus."

In the same year appeared his most noted work, *The two first Books of Philostratus, concerning the Life of Apollonius Tyanæus; together with philological notes upon each chapter*. The work is dedicated to the reader alone, in caustic contrast to the fulsome dedications of the period. In the preface any anti-theological object is ostensibly disavowed. "If one heathen writer (Hierocles) did make an ill-use of this history by comparing Apollonius with Christ, what is that to Philostratus, who never meant nor designed it so, as I can anywhere find?" So far from crediting his new miracles, Blount says his daily prayer is for faith enough to believe the old. Professing no predilection for martyrdom, he says he is ready at all times to pin his faith upon my Lord of Canterbury's sleeve.

"Wherefore, if the clergy would have Apollonius esteemed a rogue and a juggler that, being risen from the dead, he is one of the principal promoters of this Popish Plot; or that there never was any such man as Apollonius, with all my heart, what they please; for I had much rather have him decried in his reputation than that some grave cardinal, with his long beard and excommunicative ha, should have me burnt for a heretick. Therefore, for these weighty reasons I have thought fit to prorogue the remaining part of this history till interest have no longer need of a holy mask, and till there be discovered some new road to the heavenly Jerusalem, where every honest man may go without leading-strings, or without being put to the temporal charge of a spiritual guide, and till men quit

thoughts of going to heaven by the same means as they go to the playhouses—viz., by giving money to the door-keepers."

The notes or illustrations to Philostratus were longer than the text itself, and throughout smack of the scepticism of Hobbes. For instance, take the remarks on chap. iv.: "I question not but Hierocles in his parallel did impiously compare this miracle of the swans and lightning at Apollonius's will, with the melody of holy angels, and new star appearing at Christ's nativity, as being both equally strange, but not alike true." "For to believe any stories that are not approved by the public authority of the Church, is superstition; whereas to believe them that are, is Religion."

The *Biographia Britannica* informs us that the work was soon suppressed, and only a few copies sent abroad. "It was held to be the most dangerous attempt that had ever been made against revealed religion in this country, and was justly thought so, as bringing to the eye of every English reader a multitude of facts and reasonings, plausible in themselves, and of the fallacy of which none but men of parts and learning can be proper judges." A French translation of the work and of Blount's commentaries was made by M. Salvemini di Castiglioni, and was published at Amsterdam in 1779.

Blount so closely escaped prosecution for the publication of his *Philostratus* that he deemed it prudent to put forth his next work anonymously. It was entitled *Religio Laici*, and, professing to be supplementary to Dryden's poem of the same name, was founded upon the deistical treatise, *De Religione Laici*, of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. The following year he published *Janua Scientiarum; or, a Compendious Introduction to Geography, History, Chronology, Government, Philosophy, and all Genteel Parts of Literature*, and he commenced a *Life of Mahomet*, which was never published. The pieces which he selected to translate from Lucian all show a Freethought animus. They included *Alexander the False Prophet, The Dialogue of the Gods, Jupiter Tragicus, The Liar*, etc.

The Licensing Act, passed in 1685, was to expire in 1693. Blount recurred to the attack, publishing *Reasons Humbly Offered for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, to which is subjoined the character of Edmund Bohun, the Licenser of the Press, the latter being an attack upon the official who had stood in the way of the publication of many of his pieces, which afterwards came out under the title of the *Oracle of Reason*. But this was not all. Blount laid a trap for Bohun into which he fell. Bohun was requested by a bookseller to publish an anonymous pamphlet really written by Blount, entitled "*King William and Queen Mary, Conquerors*, a discourse endeavoring to prove that their majesties have on their side against the late king the principal reasons to make conquest a good title." The argument was that William had conquered King James, but not the nation, and that therefore he acquired a title to all the rights of King James, but not to any rights of the nation. Macaulay says:—

"The censor was in raptures. In every page he found his own thoughts expressed more plainly than he had ever expressed them. Never before, in his opinion, had the true claim of their majesties to obedience been so clearly stated. Every Jacobite who reads this admirable tract must inevitably be converted. The non-jurors would flock to take the oath. The nation so long divided would at length be united. From these pleasing dreams Bohun was awakened by learning, a few hours after the appearance of the discourse which had charmed him, that the title-page had set all London in a flame, and that the odious words, King William and Queen Mary, Conquerors, had moved the indignation of multitudes who had never read further."

As Blount had foreseen, the title was sufficient to raise a disturbance and remove the licenser of the odious pamphlet, which was ordered to be burned by the common hangman, while Bohun was dismissed from office, and even committed to prison. In the following year the Licensing Act was allowed to expire, and was never renewed. Blount's ruse was, says Macaulay, "a base and wicked scheme," but it secured the emancipation of the press.

In 1693 Blount published the *Oracles of Reason*, consisting of sixteen papers, in letters to Hobbes and others by Blount, Gildon, and others. Papers 1 to 4 are a vindication of Dr. Burnet's archæology against the

Mosaic account. No. 5 is an account of the Deist's religion; 6, on immortality; 7, on Ariens, Trinitarians, and Councils; 8, that Felicity consists in pleasure; 9, of Fate and Fortune; 10, the Origin of the Jews; 11, the Lawfulness of marrying two sisters successively; 12, of the subversion of Judaism and Origin of the Millennium; 13, of the augury of the ancients; 14, of natural religion as opposed to divine revelation; 15, that the Soul is Matter; 16, that the world is eternal.

In the eleventh of these Blount had something more than a theoretical interest. His wife having died, he became enamored of her sister, a lady of great beauty, wit, and discretion, who was not insensible on her side, but who was scrupulous in regard to the lawfulness of the connection. Blount is said to have applied to the Archbishop of Canterbury and other divines, who, having decided against his opinion, and the lady thereupon growing inflexible, he threw himself into a fit of despair, in which he shot himself in the head. The wound did not prove immediately mortal; he survived for some days, refusing to take food from anyone but his beloved sister-in-law. He died in August, 1693, and was buried in the family vault at Ridge, Hertfordshire. His miscellaneous works, comprising the best of his treatises, with the exception of the notes to Philostratus, were published in 1695, by Gildon of "the venal quill." It is curious that as late as 1871 his treatise on marriage with a deceased wife's sister, which is very soberly and concisely written, was published as by Charles Blount, barrister-at-law, and with no intimation of its being nearly two centuries old.

Sunless Sunday; or, the Museum the True Church.

O SUNLESS Sunday! Tomb-like temples yawn
Where living men in grave-clothes, drone dead creeds,
And Superstition, tricked in ghostly lawn,
Squats croaking like a toad midst rotting weeds.

These ghouls on Sunday spread a dismal pall
O'er Nature's fairest daughter, bright-eyed Art;
The only Avatar to one and all,
Whose silent sermons reach the dullest heart.

"To look through Nature up to Nature's god"
Is truest worship—if a God there be;
So open Homes of Art that those who plod
May roam on *Man's-day* over land and sea.

The creeds our sanest aspirations thwart;
In churches, heads and hearts in slumber nod;
Heav'n's noblest work is Man; Man's noblest, Art;
Museums, thus, are ante-rooms to God.
G. L. MACKENZIE.

Heathen Japs and their Children.

I THINK that the simple, unfettered life led by the little children here gives the girls a happy foundation to start on, as it were. There is no scolding and punishing, no nursery disgrace, no shutting away of the little ones day after day in dull nurseries, with selfish, half-educated women, whose mere daily society means torture to a sensitive, well-born child. Here children are always welcome; they come and go as they like, are spoiled, if love means spoiling, by father and mother, relations and servants; but they grow imperceptibly in the right shape.....The reverence for childhood has developed a system of kindness and care and protection of childhood, such as would be the dream, the unrealisable dream, of many a broken-hearted mother in England, powerless to protect her children from the drunken cruelty of the brute who is their father, or, in a superior class, from the more refined torture inflicted by schoolmasters and other bullies. There is no baby torture here, no beating, no starvation, none of the indescribable horrors exposed and punished in some degree by our only too necessary Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. From one end of Japan to the other a child is treated as a sacred thing, be it one's own or a stranger's. Each one carries its name and address on a ticket round its neck; but should it, indeed, stray from home, food and shelter and kindness would meet it everywhere. Do not shudder—a man will kill his child outright, scientifically, painlessly, if he sees there is nothing but want and misery before it; but while he lives the child will not suffer.—*Mrs. Hugh Fraser, in "A Diplomatist's Wife in Japan."*

An Exciting Meeting.

MR. FOOTE AT STRATFORD.

EXCITEMENT prevailed on Wednesday evening at the Town Hall, when it was thronged with anxious, earnest men and many interested women to hear the threshing out of the *Freethinker* question. Councillor Terrett was in the chair, and ruled firmly; had a weaker man held that position, the results might have been disastrous. Precautions had been taken to deal with any uproar, disturbance, or brawling. The theme, the principal speaker, and the *pros* and *cons.*, rendered the meeting an intensely interesting one.

The sympathies of the majority were with the editor and proprietor (Mr. G. W. Foote) of the tabooed paper. Freedom and progress were the keynotes, and the resolution presented and seconded was received with acclamation. It ran thus: "That this meeting of burgesses and inhabitants of West Ham protests against the attempt to violate the principle of religious equality by excluding the *Freethinker* from the reading-rooms of the Free Libraries in this borough; that it also condemns the irrational and unjust compromise accepted by the Town Council at its meeting on Tuesday, February 28, and desires the Council to revert to its former position and allow the *Freethinker* to be placed on the tables with other journals." The chairman stated that he would allow no amendment, but would give an opportunity for opposers to the resolution to speak and state the ground of their opposition. This delighted the audience, and as three speakers accepted the invitation, cheers, expostulations, greetings, and rounds of applause sounded on every side. Unfortunately, the two first speakers broke down, their premises being incorrect; and their defeat was much enjoyed. The third was a London City Missionary, and he received a fair hearing. "Let's hear him, he's a gentleman," was the pronounced opinion; consequently he was heard; but, unfortunately for him, while he made an impression, his arguments were weak, so that, while not injuring his cause, he did not affect the resolution.

There were no more public vindicators, so Mr. G. W. Foote was invited to give his defence, and he gave it.

Mr. Foote is middle-aged, stout, keen, and with a clever face, full of power, force, and determination. He can write well, and he can talk equally well. The arguments brought against him he tore to shreds; the epithets used in the Council Chamber concerning his paper were dissected, analysed, turned inside out, and scattered. His principles he explained, and his opinions of his opponents he hurled out in scathing adjectives. His word picture of the clerical deputation to the Council was ludicrous; his skit on the whole proceedings was that of a keen observer, reader, and thinker. He said that not one of the deputation, whose speeches were full of libel, had had the courage to stand upon that platform and face him. He asked for no more than fair play, and would be satisfied with no less. He called the opposition prejudice and sheer dishonesty. It was caused by fear. He called upon the men of West Ham to see that the Council's motion should be rescinded, and his paper given the same opportunities as others.

The speech was not uninterrupted; twice the speaker had to resume his seat while order was enforced. An ejection took place of at least one brawler, and enthusiasm was unbounded.

Alderman Athey and other gentlemen supported the resolution, which was uproariously carried, and, as Mr. Foote said, the glove was thrown down, and the challenge accepted.

Upon the platform sat Mrs. Foote and her daughter. That lady had a sweet and charming face, and closely followed every word spoken. She was beautifully dressed, and bore the impress of a refined gentlewoman. Her daughter, apparently about fifteen years of age, was much like her mother, and was equally concerned.

—*The Forest Gate Weekly News.*

Acid Drops.

THE trial of M. Urban-Gohier has commenced. He is charged with libelling the French Army. This is one of those crimes manufactured by governments to stop free discussion. M. Gohier has made a good fight for the liberty of the press, and we see at the last moment that he has won a great victory, having been acquitted by the Court.

Clémenceau's paper, the *Aurora*, in which Zola's famous "J'accuse" letter appeared, gives the names and addresses of twenty-seven priests and monks who have been convicted of indecent assaults upon boys during the last two years. The Superior of the Christian Brothers has had to warn them against a most odious vice which they are too prone to commit. No wonder the workmen of Lille demand that celibates shall be debarred from educating children.

George Vince, laborer, aged forty-three, a member of the

Peculiar People, was charged with manslaughter at the West Ham Police-court. He had allowed his daughter, Violet Vince, aged seven months, to die without medical assistance. Some time ago he was convicted at the Old Bailey of a similar offence, and was bound over to come up for judgment when called upon. The West Ham magistrates decided, however, that there was no case to go to a jury, and the prisoner was discharged. He left the dock exclaiming, "Bless the Lord." But the Lord did not save Thomas George Senior, who is now doing four months' hard labor for the very same crime of acting like a real Christian—and that in a Christian country. Such diverse treatment of two different persons for doing precisely the same thing is simply a public scandal.

Are the Peculiar People frightened? According to a newspaper paragraph which is going the rounds, their elders are "considering the suggestion that the members of the sect should be at liberty to call in medical aid to their sick children of tender years if so disposed."

"Poor little Joe!" said Rudyard Kipling with tears in his eyes when they told him that his daughter Josephine was seriously ill. Soon afterwards they thought it best to tell him that she was dead. "Poor little Joe!" How often has some such exclamation come from the lips of stricken fathers and mothers in this providentially governed world! And the world goes on spinning round, and they plunge into its business and pleasure, and the bereavement seems forgotten. But eyes that look so glad, or so cold, sometimes drop a tear over a secretly treasured lock of soft hair or a well-worn little shoe; and sometimes in the silent darkness of night, after pleasures have palled or business has disappointed, waking eyes seem to see a vision of a dear little love-lit face that long ago was dust.

The Protestant Alliance earnestly contends for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. At least it says so. This means that it opposes "the assaults of the Papacy throughout the Empire." T. A. Denny, chairman, and S. W. Brett, secretary, issue a fervent appeal for funds. They want £2,000 "to meet the present emergency," but don't say exactly what the emergency is, whether an over-drawn bank-account or a deficiency in official salaries. One friend has "kindly promised £50" contingently. We hope he will still summon sense enough to keep his money in his pocket.

Edward Poulson, a Christian Evidence man, sends us a tract on "The Bible and Modern Astronomy," in which he denies, on Scriptural grounds chiefly, that the earth goes round the sun, and maintains that "centrifugal and centripetal forces do not exist." He opposes the inspired trinitarian Moses to the Unitarian Newton. All that remains for him to do is to assert that the earth is flat. His tract would then be complete. As it stands, however, we hope it will have a large circulation. It is calculated to make the man in the street laugh at the Bible and Christianity.

Since the present plague appeared in India no less than 200,000 deaths from it have been recorded. The unrecorded deaths must also be fairly numerous. We commend this matter to the attention of the professional apologists of "Providence."

Fire is no respecter of persons, or of buildings. The flames from a wretched commercial establishment damaged St. Alban's Church, Holborn, the other day. That the body of the church was saved was due, not to Providence, but to the Fire Brigade.

A correspondent of the *Catholic Herald* calls Colonel Ingersoll "that arch humbug." He also quotes from Father Lambert as a scientific authority. His manners and his sense are on a par with each other.

Rev. E. E. Davies, of Holmfirth, has been lecturing at Marsden on "The Forces of Nature." He finished by saying that "these forces are surrounding us every day, and when we think of this we must be impressed with the fact that there is a wise and good Creator." This is the funniest argument for God's existence we ever saw. Does the reverend gentleman mean that the forces of nature would take a day off occasionally if there was no God to keep them up to the scratch? If he doesn't mean that, what does he mean?

The barmaid Morell, who shot the bookmaker Rile at Newcastle, on being told that her victim was likely to die, said "Thank God." In a letter found upon her she had written, "If there is a God he will forgive." It is wonderful how easily people get God on their side in nearly all they want to do.

Herbert Goodale, who killed his wife, his children, and himself at Twickenham, was an active church worker, and had only a week or so before addressed the local Y.M.C.A.

on "Why Christian Fellows Make the Best Shop Assistants, Workmen, etc." No doubt he was demented, but all the same he was not a Secularist. Had he been one, it would have been more than hinted that his insane action was, more or less, the natural outcome of Secular principles.

Staff-Sergeant Frederick Tiffin committed suicide at Clifton College. "God forgive me," he said of himself. "God guard and keep you," he said to his wife. Not an Atheist, anyhow. Talmageans, please note.

John Smith hacks and batters Mercy Nicholls to death in a street at Hertford. He took some hours doing it, and people watched or listened to it from their houses. Not one of them interfered. Hertford must be a Christian city in the Tolstolian sense. We wish, however, it were a little more Pagan. Hertford would be a more respectable city if someone had knocked John Smith on the head before he finished torturing Mercy Nicholls.

According to a telegram from St. Petersburg to Berlin, printed in the *Daily News*, the Russian Censure has prohibited the entrance into Russia of Mr. Stead's *War Against War*. If this be true, it is one of the most comical incidents of the nineteenth century, and goes to prove that the Holy Czar wants all Mr. Stead's beautiful peace sentiments to act exclusively upon the English people. Of course, it may not be true, but it is true that the *Daily News* articles on the Peace Conference have been blacked out by the Censor.

Rev. Samuel Nield, pastor of the Balsall Heath Baptist Church (Birmingham), recognises God's hand in the disappointments of the past. However, he says that God has been good in "giving us a portion" of the money for building a new church. But £2,500 is still wanted, and Pastor Nield begs this sum through his monthly magazine, instead of asking God for it straight; which induces us to suspect that it wasn't God, after all, who gave the "portion" already in hand.

There must be an awful lot of wickedness to the square yard in Brighton. The vicar of Bartholomew's states that he receives five thousand confessions a year.

Science is practically annihilating time and space on this planet. A rich American in London wants to send some papers to Chicago, and to get certain answers in return; and, being in a hurry, instead of using the Post Office, which does business on a large impersonal scale and with inevitable delays, he applies to the District Messenger Service, and a boy of sixteen is started off at once to Pigopolis. Now just imagine what would have been the fate of Christianity if its founder had waited until the present age to put in an appearance with his budget of wonders. Messengers from all parts of the civilised world would have arrived at the special scene of his performances. They would have watched him carefully, interviewed his father and mother and everybody else who knew anything about him, and extracted the most intimate secrets from his personal disciples. They would have stripped off every veil of mystery, and disclosed—well, a madman or an impostor.

Something like this happened in the case of Christ Slatter, the American incarnation of the Logos. The newspaper men followed him up, and virtually hunted him from city to city. Nobody seems to know what has become of him. Perhaps he has left an ungrateful, newspaperly world, and gone up to join Christ Number One at the right hand of Jehovah.

Cordelia Porier was organist, and Samuel Parslow was tenor, in a Catholic church at Ste. Scholastique, about forty miles from Montreal. The two pious souls became lovers; and the lady's husband, being of course in the way, was got rid of by sending him to heaven, or wherever else he could obtain admission. Since then the two pious souls have been indicted, tried, sentenced, and hung; and we presume the trio are now settling matters in some fashion.

The execution of Samuel and Cordelia did the highest credit to civilisation. A howling mob tried to force the prison gates in order to see the fun, and had to be kept back by policemen armed with revolvers. Four hundred favored persons were admitted by cards. These were other incidents which we need not relate.

Christianity is a lovely clean thing at Llandudno. The Urban District Council have sent out water-carts to lay the dust in the streets and on the parade on dry, windy Sundays, as people were afraid to go out and get their best clothes spoiled by clouds of dust. This raised the pious anger of the local Nonconformists, who called it a desecration of the blessed Sabbath. Moreover, it was right to follow "In His Steps"—Jesus Christ's, to wit—and who ever heard of his watering roads on a Sunday? One Congregationalist minister, the Rev. Jryon Davys, has the gumption to hold aloof from this

holy agitation; but all the rest of his clerical brethren are breathing out fire and slaughter against the six members of the Council who voted for Sunday water-carts. The annual election is at hand; and these six members are to be opposed tooth and nail. A committee of the churches has been formed for the purpose, and the Sabbath Dust party, with the Lord's aid, mean to win every seat.

The Young Men's Christian Association at Paterson, New Jersey, refuse to let their hall to a Scottish Society for a concert because kilts are to be worn, and such garments leave a portion of the lower limbs visible, which is calculated to debauch the minds of the Christian young men. What an inflammable—not to say prurient—lot they must be!

Rev. Mr. Hoagland is the secretary of this Young Men's Christian Association, and, on being told that kilts were worn without offence at the Court of St. James's, he replied that Queen Victoria was doubtless a good woman, but she lacked judgment and discretion. Well, we don't toady royalty in the *Freethinker*, but we would back the Widow of Windsor any day against the Rev. Mr. Hoagland in a competition on those virtues.

According to a Dalziel telegram—but can it be true?—Mrs. Margaret Lindley, representing the Women's Rights Association, has caused a Bill to be introduced in the New York State Legislature to forbid kissing, as it helps to spread infectious diseases and is also immoral. Bless her! We suppose she is past the kissing age. If she is a Christian, she should remember the text, "Salute one another with a holy kiss." She might also reflect that if kissing is made illegal some ministers will have a lot of trouble in holding their congregations together.

The Democrats in a Kansas town have nominated as mayor a gentleman who has the following items in his program: (1) Every female wearing bloomers to be fined, (2) policemen to carry Bibles, (3) any policeman heard using a swear word to be dismissed, (4) free street cars for people going to places of worship. A glorious mixture of piety and impertinence!

Commodore J. W. Philip, of the United States navy, has been presented with a splendid sword by the Sunday-school children of Texas, "in recognition of his bravery and acknowledgment of Almighty God." What a curious outcome of nearly two thousand years of the religion of the Prince of Peace!

Dr. Lyman Abbott, who has just resigned the pastorate of Plymouth Church, in order to devote himself to literary work, has lately, in common with other ministers, expressed his belief in the existence of spirits and their power to communicate with "mortals." Many ministers and laymen have said this before, but there never was a single communication from the spirits that was worth the paper it was written on. The greatest geniuses go "dotty" in the spirit world. Shakespeare talks worse than Martin Tupper, and a superb stylist like Milton groans and grunts like a common penny-a-liner.

Watson Heston, the cartoonist, continues to blaspheme in the New York *Truthseeker*. For instance, he draws a picture of St. Paul and a Yankee farmer, with a dead cat on the ground in front of him. St. Paul says: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." And the farmer says: "Well then, by gosh, I reckon if I plant that dead cat there, I'll reap a big harvest of kittens."

An American "medium" named Rogers pitched into a detective who interfered with him when he was personating a spirit. The detective prosecuted him for assault, and he was found guilty and heavily fined. We dare say, however, it will have little serious effect upon his business. Dupes are not commonly disillusioned by exposure.

"In this country, in France, in Italy, in Spain, in Germany, in Austria, in America, and the Colonies, there is a perpetual stream of deserters who can no longer endure the stifling atmosphere of the Church of Rome. But not only in the Roman Church, but in all the Protestant Churches and sects, the same revolt against the dogmas of Christianity is going on at a rapid rate. Many will tell you that out of any ten persons they know, only one or two believe in the old gospel scheme of salvation, while those who still profess to believe it, and still hold offices in their respective Churches, are exposing their disbelief by their efforts to put new interpretations on the old dogmas and formularies, and vainly repeating the folly of putting new wine into old wine-skins. All this goes to prove that, whatever the religion of the future may be called, it will certainly not be the Christian religion as it has been accepted and promulgated for nearly 2,000 years."—Rev. Charles Voysey.

"General" Booth is reported to be ill in Australia. When

ter at the West
ughtler, Violet
cal assistance.
d Bailey of a
for judgment
rates decided,
jury, and the
exclaiming,
save Thomas
is' hard labor
Christian—and
ntment of two
hing is simply

ng to a news-
eir elders are
s of the sect
sick children

1 tears in his
osephine was
est to tell him
ften has some
n fathers and
ld! And the
nge into its
ms forgotten.
es drop a tear
a well-worn
ess of night,
disappointed,
le love-lit face

for the faith
ast it says so.
the Papacy
man, and S.
funds. They
but don't say
drawn bank-
e friend has
e he will still
pocket.

sends us a
in which he
earth goes
id centripetal
d trinitarian
ns for him to
ould then be
have a large
in the street

no less than
unrecorded
mment this
pologists of

The flames
lamaged St.
the body of
; but to the

alls Colonel
from Father
and his sense

ecturing at
ed by saying
, and when
ct that there
st argument
rend gentle-
e a day off
up to the
mean?

ter Rule at
kely to die,
er she had
s wonderful
rly all they
ildren, and
orker, and
L. Y. M. C. A.

he returns home—supposing the Lord does not call him to heaven from the antipodes—he might answer Mr. H. Fowles, of West Croydon, who alleges that five hundred Field Officers of the "Army," mainly women, never receive a full week's salary, although the salaries of the headquarters' staff are always paid regularly out of the million a year which flows into the central exchequer.

What will happen when the Colonial Marriages (Deceased Wife's Sister) Bill comes up in the House of Lords, and the Bishops have an opportunity of opposing it in the name of Jehovah? It is a little Bill, consisting of only thirty-five lines, and merely seeks to make legal in England those marriages with a deceased wife's sister which are lawfully effected in British colonies and dependencies.

Mr. Matthew Arnold used to poke great fun at the Deceased Wife's Sister agitation. But ridicule and sarcasm are powerless in the long run against a serious interest, and the time cannot be far distant when Colonial legislation on this matter will be followed in England.

Picking oakum is not a sublime occupation, but tramps have to do four pounds a day at Kettering. Some members of the Board of Guardians, however, desire to give the tramps other employment; but the Rev. A. J. Atkins begs them to make no alteration, for he has tried picking oakum himself and has easily done two pounds in four hours and a half, and therefore concludes that he could just as easily do the full four pounds in nine hours. The reverend gentleman's industrial logic is on a par with his humanity.

Reynolds's Newspaper is naturally indignant at the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes memorialising Parliament against the admission of the public to the Tower on Sunday afternoons. But our contemporary should not be too indignant. It is possible to take Mr. Hughes too seriously. He is a professional man of God, who does most of his business on Sunday, and you can't expect him to enjoy seeing his potential customers drawn away from the road to his gospel-shop. Allowance must be made for the peculiar exigencies of his business.

The British and Foreign Bible Society celebrated its ninety-fifth birthday on Saturday, March 11. Two thousand boys and girls, with many grown-up friends, assembled in the afternoon at the City of London Guildhall, and were welcomed by the Lord Mayor, who, like a commercial man, dwelt upon the fact that the Society had issued altogether no less than 151,000,000 Bibles and Testaments in 350 languages. An address was then delivered by Miss Isabella Bishop, a lady who has done much travelling in the East. In the course of her address she said that in Thibet she saw a procession of men and women, clad in white, carrying the Buddhist scriptures up a hill, in order to produce rain in a time of drought. No doubt this was very ridiculous, but is it really less so when a lot of people try to produce changes in the weather by falling down upon their knees inside a building called a church? In both cases a miracle is invited. The difference in the details of the invitation is not of any great importance.

Curious, is it not, how Christians smile at all superstitions but their own? But when the Freethinker smiles at their superstitions they lose their tempers, and call him "blasphemer" and other wicked names.

At one of the recent National Liberal Federation meetings Mr. R. J. Price, M.P., told an anecdote of a minister who prayed, "O Lord, curtail the power of the Devil," whereupon an old lady in the congregation cried, "O Lord, cut off his tail altogether."

Sir John Gorst told some plain truths the other night in the House of Commons. He declared that most agricultural laborers were absolutely indifferent as to what was taught their children, either in secular or religious subjects. The greater part of them never went to church or chapel, and had none of the religious faith attributed to them. Evidently this gentleman knows, though he does not care to say so in as many words, that the "religious difficulty" is a squabble between the rival men of God.

Sir H. Fowler, following Sir John Gorst, declared that "he was quite aware of the Conscience Clause—not of its value, but of its worthlessness." This declaration was greeted with cheers by the Nonconformist M.P.'s. But when the Freethinker objects to the Conscience Clause, in Board schools controlled by a coalition of Catholics, Churchmen, and Nonconformists, he is told that it is a most admirable arrangement, and that the greatest lover of liberty could not possibly desire anything better.

The State Church parson at Flint has a curious way of dealing with parents who avail themselves of the Conscience Clause. He reads out their names from the pulpit, and gives

their addresses and occupations. Of course he doesn't want to have them boycotted. Oh dear no! Whoever could suspect a man of God of such base cruelty? Perish the thought!

Rev. G. D. Nicholas, vicar of St. Stephen's, Clewer, near Windsor, wants to see the sexes divided in church. He stated this to a congregation of "men only" at Slough. Then he went on to lecture the absent females, like a fine Christian gentleman. Many of them, he said, aped men. Well, if that is true, it is indeed ill taste—particularly if they ape Parson Nicholas. Some of them, he continued, actually wore what they had the consummate impudence to style "rational dress." Thus the Clewer man of God maundered on, after the fashion of Paul, who told women how they ought to wear their hair, and gave them much other gratuitous advice. Why doesn't Parson Nicholas confine himself to showing the way to heaven, if he knows it, and leave the women alone?

Church rates are still levied at Coventry, in spite of the resistance of Nonconformists. The amount realised goes to the vicar of St. Michael's. However, the rate is to be "redeemed," and £5,000 is being raised for the purpose. Mr. Balfour, on behalf of the Crown, has promised a contribution of £200—which is one way of spending the people's money.

Even the *Daily News*, in reviewing Professor Dill's new book on *Roman Society in the last Century of the Western Empire*, is obliged to say that the statements of Christian apologists about the morals of the Pagans are "as false as a picture of English Society would be if the Divorce Court and the Assize Courts, and the revelations of the Bankruptcy Court, were taken to represent the England of the close of the nineteenth century."

The Archbishop of Canterbury may be many things, but he is not a fool. He knows what he is about in describing Church property as "a peculiar kind of private property." We quite agree with him: very peculiar.

The New York *Truthseeker* gives the full text of a Bill which has been introduced in the Californian Senate. It is designed in the interest of the strictest Sabbatarianism, and aims at fining all persons who are guilty of any sort of business or pleasure on Sunday. Even hunting is proscribed. A man who shoots anything on Sunday—even if he only shoots a minister, we presume—is to be liable to a fine of from ten to fifty dollars or a month's imprisonment. Sellers of Sunday newspapers are to share the same fate.

Christ in California.

California has long been the favorite home for colonies of all descriptions, communistic, religious, æsthetic, economic, and co-operative. One of the most curious and successful is the little Dunkard colony in the Pomona Valley. The Dunkards are a small community of men, women, and children who desire to reproduce in the nineteenth century the life of the first. They originally came from the Eastern States of the Union, taking refuge from the wickedness of the world in the orange and lemon groves of Southern California. The colony was established seven years ago, and to-day consists of some 300 men and women, and as many more children. The Dunkards take as their ideal community the first Church at Jerusalem. They chose California because it is practically in the same latitude as Palestine. They cultivate olives because that fruit was grown in Christ's time, and the men wear beards because Christ did so. They have, however, drawn the line at the Biblical costume. The proposition that the Dunkards should adopt the toga as their garb was rejected, it being considered as not adapted to agricultural pursuits and modesty. The clothing of both men and women is of the plainest, no ornamentation of any description being permitted. The colony cheerfully recognises the authority of Cæsar by the payment of taxes. The Dunkards never vote, or speak of politics, nor do they read newspapers or magazines, or any fiction. Their only literature is the Bible and Early Church histories, which are diligently studied. They keep themselves studiously apart from the rest of the world, limiting their dealings with it to the sale of the products of the colony.—*Daily News*.

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-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 19, Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11.30, "Truth and Falseness about Freethought"; 7, "Souls, Spirits, and Ghosts."

To Correspondents.

DURING Mr. Charles Watts's absence from England his address will be, c/o *Truthseeker* office, 28 Lafayette-place, New York City, U.S.A.

"FREETHINKER" DEFENCE FUND (WEST HAM).—We have received.—H. Irving, 2s.; Martin Weatherburn, 2s. 6d.; J. D. Stones, 4s.; G. Dawson Baker, 1s. 6d.; J. E. Banks, 2s. 6d.; Policeman, 2s.; H. Good, 2s.; J. R. Adams, 1s.; J. Shipp, 1s.; G. Caffrey, 2s.; H. Bishop, 2s. 6d.; Joseph Close, 2s. 6d.; W. Cody, 5s.; Putney, 2s. 6d.; H. Barron, 2s. 6d.; Florence W. Barron, 2s. 6d.; Miss B. Winder, 2s. 6d.; J. Barry, 5s.; R. Trelease, 6s. 6d.; A. Simson, 5s.; Louis Organ, 2s.; C. E. Hall, 2s. 6d.; S. Mitchell, 2s.; W. H. Spivey, 1s.; B. Shaw, 1s.; E. Moorhouse, 1s.; Mrs. Moorhouse, 1s.; R. Tabrum, 1s.; G. Brady, 10s.; W. Lamb, 5s.; J. Martin, 3s.; J. Jones, 2s. 6d.; S. J., 2s.; Richard Carroll, 10s.; W. R. Standage, 2s.; C. M. H., 3s.; J. Robinson, 2s. 6d.; J. Greeves Fisher, 10s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*—Manchester Branch, £1 4s.; Derby Branch, £1; W. Fleming, 2s. 6d.; C. Mascall, 5s.; A. Beadle, 1s.; G. White, 2s.; Charlton, 2s.; Abraham Jones, 2s. 6d. The acknowledgment to J. S. E. last week should have been J. E. T.

J. NEIL.—Ingersoll said the Mecca of music. No doubt he referred to Bayreuth, where the Wagner festivals are held. We believe the Colonel has no technical knowledge of music, but he appreciates it highly, and has said some of the finest things about it.

H. IRVING (Barnsley) sends for the West Ham Fund a postal order he received from the *Cleckheaton Guardian* for the best essay on "Did Thomas Paine Recant?" We make the following extract from his letter:—"Bigots killed Bradlaugh, and shortened J. M. Wheeler's life; and it is not through any fault of theirs that you are alive to-day. Grumblers have said that you have not the qualities of a leader, and here you are, as you have been many times since Bradlaugh's death, in the front of the fight, striking the hardest blows, while those who grumbled are silently watching you, if they are not asleep. I admire you as a fighter, and people who talk about the time having gone by for militant Secularism don't see much farther than their noses."

MARTIN WEATHERBURN, the Northumberland stalwart, writes:—"As an old Freethinker myself, I have every confidence in you as general, and I hope the party will rise to the occasion, and furnish you with the necessary ammunition."

J. D. STONES.—Pleased to hear from one who has read the *Freethinker* since its first issue. You will have read the manifesto in last week's number.

W. CODY, sending his "mite" for the West Ham Fund, writes:—"If there is one thing I regret being poor for, it is being unable to build you a splendid hall and present it to you as a free gift, in admiration of your noble eloquence. You have afforded me many pleasant and interesting Sunday evenings, for which I am deeply grateful."

A. POLICEMAN, who, for obvious reasons, doesn't want his name published, sends his contribution to the West Ham Fund, and hopes what he is good enough to call our "splendid, untiring efforts" will be successful. "I have read," he says, "every issue of the *Freethinker* since its first number, and I never came across anything indecent or immoral. If I had, I would have thrown it into the fire." This correspondent says he ordered two copies of the *Book of God*, and induced a neighbor to accept and read one. His neighbor has read it, and "praises it very much."

G. CAFFREY.—Thanks for your offer of assistance, but there are plenty of good workers in West Ham itself.

JOSEPH CLOSE is "delighted" with our West Ham manifesto, and adds Thomas Paine's words, "These are the times that try men's souls."

PUTNEY.—Pleased to hear that you think the *Freethinker* improves with age. Thanks for your encouraging letter.

J. BARRY.—Yes, a good advertisement, and we are making the most of it.

H. R. SPARKES, who has been acting as secretary to the West Ham committee, was referred to in our last under the dreadful name of Sparkes. We apologise for the blunder, and thank Mr. Sparkes at the same time for his good services.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—W. Mac Siccar, £1; East London Branch, 10s.; J. Withey, 5s.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—W. Brownlee, £5.

J. A. KAY.—We know absolutely nothing of *creation* in the sense of creating material, but only in the sense of changing material from one form or position to another. Whoever asserts that a being called God created the universe, in the sense of producing its substance, is merely using an idle form of words, which the human mind is incapable of realising as a definite conception. You need not read a lot of metaphysics to understand this.

C. H. CATTELL.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. P. BALL.—Once more thanks for your valued batches of cuttings.

OCTAVIUS DREWELL.—Your letter is well written, but we do not care to insert more criticisms of Dr. Keeling's position if he does not care to reply to them. A one-sided fight is not exhilarating.

H. C. LONG.—No use pursuing the subject, though what you say is much to the point.

J. MARTIN.—Of course the West Ham bigots didn't mean to give us an advertisement. They would like to burke this journal but it can't be done.

J. JONES.—Pleased to have the sympathy and approval of such a veteran. The other matter shall be seen to.

RICHARD CARROLL.—The sight of your handwriting was most welcome.

W. R. STANDAGE.—Received. Mr. Foote is writing you.

C. M. H.—Glad to know the West Ham friends were so pleased with Mr. Foote's speech.

C. HUGHES.—Thanks for papers and your encouraging letter.

W. COX (Liverpool) suggests that the Birkenhead friends, who have been trying to form a Branch, should join their forces to the Liverpool Branch, and lectures might then be arranged on the south side of the Mersey. This correspondent reports that Mr. Cohen has had successful meetings.

NATHAN B. GOODMAN.—We thank you for offering a copy of the *Freethinker* to the Whitechapel Public Library. That the Commissioners have declined it only shows that they accurately reflect the general bigotry.

T. WILMOT, secretary, Camberwell Branch, has removed to 27 Lorrimer-street, Walworth. Lecturers, &c., please note.

W. H. SPIVEY.—Kindly convey our thanks to the Huddersfield friends. We will arrange to see them again as soon as possible.

G. BRADY.—Glad to see you watching our West Ham fight so sympathetically from such a distance.

R. TRELEASE, subscribing to our West Ham fund, says that, as Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and his friends have dropped the Devil, they perhaps left him at West Ham, where he goes under the name of Mackey.

A. SIMSON.—Pleased to hear from Mrs. Neate's brother. Thanks. Win or lose, we shall go on fighting. But the end is not yet. Alderman Fulcher will go on with his rescinding motion, and we may have more public meetings at West Ham, and more literature distributed. Twenty thousand copies of our Manifesto are being put into circulation in the borough. One friend, with the assistance of others, is putting a thousand copies in envelopes, and delivering at every house in his immediate neighborhood.

LOUIS ORGAN.—The reverend critic's stupid letter is marked "private," and therefore we cannot see our way to making it the theme of a paragraph. Tell him to send us a letter for publication. That was an amusing romancer who said he saw Mr. Foote ride up to a Camberwell open-air meeting on a white horse, with top boots and spurs. Nothing like completing the picture.

RECEIVED.—Freethought Magazine—Crescent—Torch of Reason—Two Worlds—Open Court—Ethical World—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—Freidenker—Brann's Iconoclast—Freethought Ideal—Public Opinion—West Ham Herald—Blue Grass Blade—Glasgow Herald—Sydney Bulletin—Catholic Herald—People's Newspaper—Forest Gate Weekly News—Huddersfield Examiner—West Ham Guardian—New York Truthseeker—Torch—Awakener of India—Boston Investigator.

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE lectured to a capital audience on Sunday evening in the Camberwell Secular Hall. Mr. A. B. Moss occupied a seat on the platform, and was a very appreciative listener. Mr. Victor Roger was in the chair. After the lecture a member of the audience mounted the platform to offer opposition. He gave his name as Bailey. Afterwards his first name turned out to be Noah. He was therefore the writer of certain scurrilous, inflammatory letters against the Secularists during the Peckham Rye trouble last summer. Mr. Roger reminded him of this, and he was very indignant at the exposure. Mr. Foote's reply was much relished and applauded.

Mr. Foote pays the Chatham Branch a visit to-day (March 19), lecturing morning and evening in the Secular Hall, New Brompton. It is nearly twelve months since he did a week's mission work in the locality.

Mr. Chilperic Edwards lectured to a good audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, his excellent address being highly appreciated. The platform will be occupied this evening (March 19) by Mr. Joseph McCabe, who will lecture on "The High Church Movement." Most of our readers will recollect that Mr. McCabe came over to Free-thought from the Roman Catholic Church, in which he held a distinguished position. This is his first appearance on a Secular platform in London, and we hope the metropolitan Freethinkers will give him a crowded meeting and a warm-hearted reception.

After a long and arduous quest, the Birmingham Branch, which was expelled by bigotry from the Bristol-street Board School, has obtained the use of a good hall, centrally situated in Broad-street. Mr. Foote was appealed to, and has consented to go down next Sunday (March 26) and open the ball there. To do this he had to cancel his engagement for that day in London, but he felt that the Birmingham Branch must be supported to the fullest possible extent in its fight against calumny and persecution.

We may mention here that the Birmingham friends applied for the use of a Board school at Aston, and were refused. Mr. S. G. Middleton raised a question on this matter at a meeting of the School Board. Two reverend gentlemen declared that the schools were built to teach the Bible in—which is news to those who have read the Education Act of 1870—and that the Board could not permit the Bible to be attacked in them. The chairman added something about contaminating the morals of the people. These School Board bigots have all a strong family likeness.

The West Ham meeting on the *Freethinker* question was a magnificent success. Stratford Town Hall was packed with an eager audience on Wednesday evening, March 8. There must have been two thousand people present, and perhaps more, for the very gallery was crowded, and every bit of room on the platform was occupied. It was a free and open meeting; no single person, however objectionable, was turned away from the doors; yet the sympathy of the crowd was overwhelmingly in favor of justice to this journal. Mr. Foote had a grand reception on rising to speak; indeed, it was some time before he could make a beginning. His address was very frequently applauded, and he sat down amidst a tremendous ovation. When the resolution was put by the chairman, condemning the action of the bigots, censuring the compromise adopted of putting the *Freethinker* behind the screen, and calling upon the Town Council to have it placed upon the Library tables with other publications, a forest of hands went up in its favor. Only about thirty hands in that great meeting were held up against it. No wonder the friends of fair-play cheered and cheered again. It was a splendid triumph.

Christian Evidence and Anti-Infidel rowdies came to the West Ham meeting for the purpose of creating disorder. Ample precautions, however, were taken against their designs. There were plenty of stalwart stewards who meant business. This was borne home to the minds (and bodies) of some of the blackguards. In the middle of Mr. Foote's speech some noisy interrupters had to be warned. One special knot of them came from Deptford way, with a well-known scurrilous ringleader, who fancied he could make a row with impunity; but a Labor man, who is also a Secularist, got hold of him neatly, and took him out most scientifically. When the pious rowdy brigade found that the organisers really meant to stop disorder, by physical force if necessary, they quieted down into perfect silence and respectability; although they afterwards muttered what they would do when they had the chance.

Two or three of the pious rowdy brigade were there in the expectation of being allowed to oppose the resolution. They were looking forward to a revel of personalities. Imagine their disgust, then, when it was very properly announced by the chairman that nobody would be permitted to speak against the resolution unless he was a resident in West Ham. The fellows were absolutely and completely sold. They looked it, and they said it to each other.

Two local Christians who did speak against the resolution were almost worth exhibiting. They made a frightful mess of it. Neither sense nor English came from their lips. Their characteristics might be summed up in one word—incapacity. Some would use a worse designation. It was really pitiable. Not one of the clerical tribe who slandered Mr. Foote behind his back had the courage to face him at that free and open public-meeting. This was forcibly pointed out to the audience, and it evoked a storm of indignation.

Capital speeches were made by local men at the West Ham meeting. Councillor Terrett, who was in the chair, and filled it most admirably, did not detain the meeting long, and every word was to the point. Mr. Martin Judge, who proposed the resolution, made what the *Herald* well calls "a good swinging speech." Mr. Sims, who seconded, got in some sly happy hits at the bigots. Alderman Athey showed himself to be a thorough humorist. His dressing down of Councillor Boardman, who started the attack on the *Freethinker* in the Town Council, was irresistibly droll. Councillor Scott spoke well, though very briefly. Councillor Godbold spoke as a Christian, and he indignantly denied that the *Freethinker* was "immoral" or "indecent." To say so, he declared, was a ridiculous libel. Alderman Fulcher scored heavily by announcing that he meant to move for the rescinding of the February 28 resolution.

Alderman Fulcher pledged himself to move that the compromise resolution of February 28 be rescinded. He is a stubborn man in matters of conviction, and we do not doubt that he will keep his word. All the aldermen and councillors at the meeting promised to support him individually, including the chairman of the Free Libraries Committee. Clearly, therefore, the *Freethinker* question is not exactly settled, as the bigots on the one side, and some weaklings on the other side, fondly imagined. There will be more fighting, and, alas and alack, more advertising of this terrible paper.

The West Ham *Herald* devotes a column of small type to a report of the "Big Meeting at the Town Hall." Incidentally the reporter says that those who turned out the disturbers were not inhabitants of West Ham. This is only half true; moreover, the disturbers themselves were not inhabitants of West Ham. They came from other parts of London with the avowed intention of breaking up the meeting if they could. They were allowed to pass in, but were warned that they would be turned out if they were disorderly. That warning had to be made good—unfortunately for them. *Voilà tout.* For the rest, the *Herald* report is fair enough. It admits that the resolution was carried by "an overwhelming majority," and that "probably not more than fifty hands were held up against it." It also allows that "the cheering which greeted Mr. Foote was both long and lusty," and that "it cannot be denied that he is a powerful speaker."

The West Ham *Guardian's* report is briefer than the *Herald's*, but it admits the size of the meeting, and chronicles the fact that the resolution was carried by "a large majority." "It is quite evident," the *Guardian* says editorially, "that the vexing question of the *Freethinker* is not yet settled, as every one had been led to hope, by the decision of the Town Council last week."

This is the resolution that was carried at West Ham:—"That this meeting of burgesses and inhabitants of West Ham protests against the attempt to violate the principle of religious equality by excluding the *Freethinker* from the reading-rooms of the Free Libraries in this borough; that it also condemns the irrational and unjust compromise accepted by the Town Council at its meeting on Tuesday, February 28, and desires the Council to revert to its former position and allow the *Freethinker* to be placed on the table with other journals."

Miss Vance took a number of names at the West Ham meeting of persons willing to become members of a local N. S. S. Branch. A meeting of these is called for Tuesday next (March 21), at 8 p.m., at 33 High-street, Plaistow. Miss Vance will be present, and the Branch will be started there and then, if possible with a program of immediate propagandist work.

Sermons from Shakespeare is the title of a volume by the Rev. William Day Simonds, published at Chicago. We have not seen the book, but we are glad to see the title. It shows that even ministers of religion—or some of them—are moving forward. There are plenty of good texts for good sermons in Shakespeare.

Editor Green, of the *Freethought Magazine*, Chicago, emphasises what he said before about the *Freethinker* deserving to have a large circulation in America. "There is no reason," he says, "why that little pond known as the Atlantic Ocean should hinder American Freethinkers from enjoying that valuable paper, which, we repeat, in some respects is the ablest Freethought journal in the world."

Billy—"So yer didn't get nuthin' but a jack-knife and a sled for Christmas?" Tommy—"Dat's all I got worth speakin' of. Dere wuz a suit uv clothes, and a overcoat, and a hat or two, and some underclothes, and a Bible, and a book of poems, and some stockin's, and gloves, and collars and cuffs, and a few other trifles like dat not worth speakin' of."—*Back.*

Is Theology a Science?

THEOLOGY has sometimes been called the science of sciences. It is a science so-called which relates to the attributes and purposes of God. There is no doubt that thousands, and hundreds of thousands, of cultivated minds have given their best thought through years to the study of this subject, and vast libraries of books have been written to expound it; but is theology, properly speaking, a science? There is no question but that connected with the study of it have been conducted investigations in ancient history, in prehistoric archaeology, in geography, in philosophy, and in science in general, which have resulted in enlargement of human knowledge and in improvement in man's social and moral condition. But while these subjects, studied in connection with theology, undoubtedly belong to the province of human knowledge, and therefore to the province of science, is it true that God can be made a subject of study and knowledge, in regard to his nature and plans, supposing that his plans can be ascertained and classified in a manner to justify us in calling a theology a science?

What do we know, what can be learned, in regard to the nature of God? God, it is said, is infinite. Can the infinite be defined? Can it be comprehended? Is it picturable to the human mind? If it be considered that God is pure intelligence, what conception of pure intelligence can we form except as it resembles the only intelligence with which we are acquainted, the intelligence of man or the lower intelligence of the brutes?

The intelligence of man is growth, expansion. It implies bodily senses, the power of perception, something about it to perceive, the power of conception, the revival of impressions made upon the brain, the multiplication of these conceptions or ideas, and their aggregation through weeks and months and years in a coherent, unified system, producing the intelligence of the experienced and educated mind. But all this implies organism and environment, and action and inter-action between the two. It implies consciousness and growth—the growth of intelligence from that of the infant to that of the adult. It implies surroundings, and therefore finiteness.

When we speak of the intelligence of God do we mean that God is a limited being with an organism, who is finite in space, and who is, therefore, surrounded by objects which he can perceive; that he has ideas which had a beginning; that they are based upon what he sees about him; that he has imagination by which he brings to mind things that are a distance from him; that he has memory by which he recalls at one time things forgotten at another; that he has reason, the faculty of perceiving relations, and comparing ideas and deducing conclusions, and thereby adding to his knowledge; that he possesses sympathy, or has the capacity for suffering like finite beings, and therefore feels regret and sorrow over suffering because of this sympathy?

No. Yet this is the only kind of intelligence of which we can form any definite idea. Of infinite intelligence we can frame no conception whatever; we cannot form any idea of that which the two words, "infinite intelligence," represent.

The words as we use them are as contradictory as the expression, "a square circle," or "a round triangle." Then it follows that the word God in philosophy is like the letter *x* in an indeterminate algebraic equation. It stands for the unknown. We have no formula by which we can solve the problem and learn what the symbol represents; that is only saying that the mathematics of human intelligence is inadequate to deal with the problem of the infinite. This being so, what validity is there in the claim that the noumenon, or cause and basis of all things, that which lies beneath all phenomena, that which is the ultimate of every activity, physical and psychological, throughout the entire universe during beginningless and endless time, is a proper object of scientific study?

The fact is, theology is not a science, and never was one. Science is knowledge, but there can be no science of anything of which there can be no knowledge, and there can be no knowledge of anything that does not come within the range of our human faculties. If one uses the terms which are employed to describe human

intelligence to represent, for the satisfaction of the undeveloped mind, that which philosophy knows is unrepresentable, let it be so understood; but for the thinker to claim that these conceptions of God are absolutely truthful, and that the utterance and reiteration of such speculations are the teachings of science, is simply to claim what is obviously absurd.

B. F. UNDERWOOD (America).

—(Reproduced.)

What Would Jesus do?

I USUALLY spring out of bed as the clock strikes seven, but this morning, instead of doing so, I stopped to consider matters. I had been reading the night before "In His Steps," and an impulse seized me to follow Jesus. Therefore, instead of jumping out of bed, I stopped to think, "What would Jesus do?"

I could not remember any precedent for Jesus getting out of bed. "Foxes have holes," etc. I had evidently made an error in going to bed at all, but it was too late to rectify it. The question I had to face was: What, given the circumstances, would Jesus do?

I was loath to begin the day with a false start, so I gave all my attention to this question, and besought the counsel of the Holy Ghost.

I was awakened out of a beautiful sleep by my wife informing me it was half-past eight, and I was so startled by the information that I leaped out of bed without thinking any more about Jesus.

There was no difficulty about breakfast, except that it had to be taken in haste, like the Passover feast. Fortunately for me, Jesus used to eat, except during his famous Dr. Tanner feat, lasting forty days.

I went down to the office, doubting very much whether Jesus would have done so. I cannot remember that he ever did a stroke of work in his life.

I was half an hour late. (They certainly do say that Jesus came much later than he was expected.) I had to make some excuse, and on the spur of the moment I said I had been unwell. (Jesus once told a lie—"She is not dead, but sleepeth.") Being late put me wrong for the whole day, and made me feel out of temper. But that did not matter, for Jesus was often in a bad temper.

In our office we have occasionally to do some rather shady things. But they do not trouble me much. In office hours I belong to the governor, conscience and all. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

In the course of the day I had to chuck a cheeky hawker off the premises. I could not do it quite in the style of Jesus; I had not time to make a whip of small cords. But my intentions were good, and the spirit of Jesus was there. Was he (the hawker) to make my governor's house a place of merchandise (without paying rent)?

So I went home to my wife, not on the whole dissatisfied with my first day's walking "In His Steps." It is not so difficult as some people would have us believe, if you only think of the right text at the right moment.

It is true for my last act I could not recall any precedent. I could not remember that Jesus ever went home to his wife. But I went home to mine.

J. W. B.

As Others Saw Him.

A WELL-KNOWN WRITER'S OPINION OF OUR LATE LEADER.

"At that time Bradlaugh's hand seemed against every man, and every man's hand against Bradlaugh—a position in itself calling for pity, if not for commendation. It was the hero of later days one felt glad to have seen, the pale, buffeted, hustled, but unconquerable figure, ex-errand boy, trooper, coal-retailer, and lawyer's clerk arraigning that awful body, the House of Commons, arraigning traditional England, in his own person embodiment of all that has made England's greatness, the passion for spiritual as well as political freedom."—Miss M. Betham-Edwards, "Reminiscences," p. 217.

"Ours is a Christian Army," so he said
A regiment of bango men who led.
"And ours a Christian Navy," added he
Who sailed a thunder-junk upon the sea.
Better they know than men of peace can do
What is an army and a navy, too.
Pray God there may be sent them by-and-bye
The knowledge what a Christian is, and why.
For somewhat lamely the conception runs
Of a brass-buttoned Jesus firing guns.

—Ambrose Bierce.

Memorial to the Home Secretary.

THE following Memorial has been addressed to the Home Secretary:—

"Your Memorialists, the Committee of the Criminal Law Reform Department of the Humanitarian League, in common with many other members of the community, have been greatly impressed by the inequality of the sentences passed by different judges on prisoners convicted of the same offences, and by the extreme severity of the sentences passed by some of them. They apprehend that this difference does not arise from any peculiarity in the cases tried before the judges to whom they refer, inasmuch as the same differences appear year after year, notwithstanding changes in the circuits taken by the judges. They believe that different judges differ in principle as to the objects which should be aimed at by the State in punishing criminals, and that some of the judges aim not merely at the protection of society, but at retaliation or revenge upon all persons who, in their opinion, 'deserve' punishment, whether such retaliation is beneficial to the community or otherwise; and that, if the judges were consulted as to their reasons for inflicting punishment, a startling difference of opinion among them would become apparent.

"These remarks appear to your Memorialists to be specially applicable to the punishment of flogging. Some judges resort to this punishment on almost every occasion when the law permits it, while others never resort to it at all. Moreover, some judges sentence prisoners to a large number of lashes, or to more than one infliction of the punishment, much more frequently than do the great majority of their colleagues on the Bench; and we fear that these judges pass sentences with little regard to the good of society, and solely with a view of retribution. We find, moreover, that the judges whose sentences appear to us most open to exception are often amongst those whose decisions are frequently reversed on appeals in civil cases.

"We would further call your attention to the fact that the great reduction in the severity of our penal system which has taken place during the present century has not led, even temporarily, to any outburst of crime; that every successive reduction of its severity has, in fact, been accompanied by an improvement in the criminal statistics of this country; but that, after all our reductions, our criminal system is still probably the severest that exists in any civilised country, and that there is every reason to believe that its severity might be further reduced, not only without disadvantage, but with actual benefit to the community.

"Under the present system you alone are authorised to correct the excessive sentences passed by certain judges, and to remit the floggings imposed by them on persons whom the great majority of the judges would exempt from that penalty. You alone can effect something towards equalising our sentences, rendering the law more certain in its application, and preventing the conflict between public opinion and the administration of the law which must frequently arise so long as sentences are left to the almost uncontrolled discretion of a single judge, who may entertain peculiar and erroneous views as regards the punishment of criminals.

"We therefore appeal to you to take a more active part in the correction of these evils than has hitherto been done; to ascertain whether certain judges do not systematically pass sentences based on principles in which neither you nor the public concur; to remedy as promptly and completely as possible the evil of excessive or unsuitable sentences, and to avoid any appearance of sustaining by your action (or inaction) principles and practices with which we feel confident that you do not concur.

"(Signed) JOSEPH COLLINSON,
"For the Humanitarian League."

The Missionary.

We sent him ter de heathens
Ter lay de gospel down;
Dey chopped him inter mincemeat,
En sol' him by de poun'!

O believers,
Dat's a bitter cup;
You go to he'p the heathen,
En de heathen eat you up!

We sent 'em out another one,
En still dey treat him rough,
En sen' us dis ongrateful word:
"Dis one ain't fat enough!"

O believers,
What dem heathens mean?
Dey want de missionary fat,
En grumble ef he lean!

—Atlanta Constitution.

Book Chat.

THOSE people who think that advanced periodicals are necessarily shortlived will learn with surprise that our contemporary, the *Westminster Review*, is now in its seventy-sixth year of publication. This paper was started as long ago as 1823, and its list of contributors has always been such as few of its rivals could boast of. That the *Westminster Review* can still hold its own in these days of cheap publishing speaks well in its favor, and that it still is abreast of the times bears testimony to the ability of its conductors.

* * *

It seems well-nigh impossible to obtain truth from priests. They always have regarded it as being far too precious for popular consumption. The Dean of Ely is no exception to this rule. In his recent book, *Charles Kingsley and the Christian Social Movement*, he unblushingly states that the Christian Socialists founded the Co-operative Movement. From this we are probably to conclude that Dr. Stubbs either never heard of the Rochdale Pioneers, or that he was writing with his tongue in his cheek.

* * *

The names of Maurice Kingsley, "Tom" Hughes, Vansittart Neale, and J. M. Ludlow are too well known among co-operators for Dr. Stubbs's preposterous claim on their behalf to be taken seriously in that quarter. But the general reader is likely to be deceived, and that is precisely why the Dean of Ely claims the Co-operative Movement as being founded by Christians. Everyone knows that "the Christian Socialists" came to naught. The members of the Co-operative Productive Societies of to-day will be astonished to find that this imaginative ecclesiastic is attempting to rewrite the history of their Movement in the interest of his own confounded "ism."

* * *

Mr. Ernest Newman, who achieved a distinct success with his book, *Gluck and the Opera*, has just issued through Mr. Bertram Dobell a very interesting work entitled *A Study of Wagner* (published at 12s.). In this bulky volume of 420 pages Mr. Newman attempts to study Wagner from every standpoint suggested by his work—musical, poetical, and literary. For this purpose the mass of ordinary biographical matter has been dispensed with—the essential facts of Wagner's life being presented in a Synthetical Table—and the whole volume is devoted to the attempt to find a *tertium quid* between the Wagnerians and the anti-Wagnerians—to see the man, in fact, as he really was. The method adopted has been to throw light on his musical theories from his musical practice, and *vice versa*, and to arrive at a general psychological estimate of him by examining his utterances on non-musical subjects, and co-ordinating the results thus obtained with those given by the study of him as musician and poet. Mr. Newman writes very well. Though we have read many so-called "studies" of Wagner's work, we have never seen anything so clear, critical, and comprehensive. This study of a great composer is one to be treasured by all interested in music. We can strongly recommend it, and honestly thank the author for his book.

* * *

The numerous admirers of Baron Corvo's delicious blasphemies will hear with pleasure that Mr. John Lane will shortly publish a second series of *Stories Told Me*. Baron Corvo's book has sold well, and attracted very considerable attention, in spite of the journalistic conspiracy of silence concerning the volume. We quite agree with the *Echo*, which called it one of the most notable books of the past year.

* * *

Yet another new magazine! After the lugubrious *Puritan* we now have the brightly-written and cleverly-illustrated *Butterfly*. This new-comer is the most dainty and artistic publication we have seen for a long time, and the list of contributors, both artists and writers, seems to promise a monthly delight. The two "supernatural" cartoons by Mr. S. H. Sime will interest our readers. They are very funny, very blasphemous, and, of course, very original. A caricature of the Duke of York by Max Beerbohm in the same number is a revelation. We shall look forward with lively expectation to succeeding issues.

* * *

Mr. Walter Scott has just added Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh* to the well-known "Canterbury Poets." The volume has an Introduction from the pen of Mr. Wingate Rinder.

* * *

Major-General Dawsonne M. Strong has published through Watts and Co. (2s. 6d.) a volume on *The Metaphysic of Christianity and Buddhism*. The author has lived in the East, and understands its spirit. The titles of some of his chapters will give an idea of their contents—"Jesus and Gotama," "God and the Kosmos," "Soul, Self, Individuality, and Karma," "Heaven and Nirvana." This book is very well worth reading. It is interesting, instructive, and suggestive.

The *Open Court* (Chicago) for March opens with a long and interesting article on the Encyclopædists by Professor L. Lévy-Bruhl, of Paris. The frontispiece is an admirable portrait of D'Alembert. Dr. Paul Carus contributes a learned, illustrated article on "The Cross and its Significance." Professor Ribot, of Paris, writes on "The General Ideas of Infants and Deaf-Mutes." A valuable, informing number.

The recent death of Miss Sara Hennell, who lived to a very advanced old age, recalls the fact that it was really her brother who gave positive distinction to the family name. Charles C. Hennell's *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity*, published in 1838, was a remarkable work for the time at which it appeared, and is worth reading even now. Hennell was a sound scholar, a keen and bold critic, and the master of an excellent style. It was he who influenced George Eliot, and turned her mind in the direction of translating Strauss and Feuerbach.

The *New Century Review* for March contains an interesting article on "The Murder Novel," by John M. Robertson, who writes far too little on purely literary subjects. Mr. Cuming Walter continues his elucidation of "The Mystery of Shakespeare's Sonnets." The other articles do not call for comment.

The latest addition to the very cheap editions of notable books is the sixpenny reprint of George Moore's clever novel, *Esther Waters*, which is published this week by the firm of Walter Scott, Ltd.

It is with unusual pleasure we hear that Mr. Redway has just issued a new and cheaper edition at 6s. of Miss M. Betham-Edwards's *Reminiscences*, which we reviewed recently in these columns.

Correspondence.

GAMBLING.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of March 5 it is stated that in a sermon which I preached at St. Paul's Cathedral against gambling I said: "I could not condemn gambling when founded on scientific or technical knowledge." As I said nothing of the kind, I call upon you to contradict the mis-statement with as much publicity as possible.

The error appears to have originated in a misleading paragraph under a sensational heading in the *Westminster Gazette* of February 20. But on February 23 the *Westminster Gazette* published a letter from me setting forth the true facts of the case.

The gross misrepresentation of my statement appears to be the less excusable when it is noted that other papers have interpreted my sermon in its true sense. The *Record* of February 24 concludes its report with these words: "His sermon, which we hear is to be published by the Anti-Gambling League, is likely to have the greater effect from its studied moderation." And the *Christian* of March 2 introduces a quotation from the sermon with the remark: "It would be well for parents to ponder some of the words recently spoken on gambling by the Rev. Allen Whitworth at St. Paul's."

I desire the most free criticism of anything that I have said. I only demur to being held responsible for what I did not say, and could not have said.

W. ALLEN WHITWORTH.

Buddha Clean of Blood.

No ravished country has ever borne witness to the prowess of the followers of Buddha; no murdered men have poured out their blood on their hearthstones, killed in his name; no ruined women have cursed his name to high heaven. He and his faith are clean of the stain of blood. He was the preacher of the Great Peace, of love, of charity, of compassion; and so clear is his teaching that it can never be misunderstood.—*H. Fielding, "The Soul of a People," p. 88.*

Not in a Pious Mood.

Mrs. Billus: "Y-yes, John is at home, but I hardly think he's in a suitable frame of mind to see you."
The Rev. Dr. Fourthly (making a pastoral call): "He is in no serious trouble, I hope?"
Mrs. Billus: "Why, no; but he took one of the furnace registers apart a little while ago to fix it, and he's trying to put it together again."—*Chicago Tribune.*

Eager Listener—"And are those cannibals really ignorant creatures, utterly devoid of taste and refinement?" Returned Missionary—"Yes, quite devoid of taste, I assure you! There was my colleague, for instance; a fat, coarse-grained man, and yet—ah, I trust he is in the better world!"—*New York Journal.*

He Dared not Disobey.

"BELOVED flock," the parson said,
Then paused and wiped his eyes;
"As pastor and as people
We must sever tender ties.
I've a call to go to Blankton,
To be their chosen pastor;
A call so loud, to disobey
I would but grieve the Master."

Replied the spokesman of the flock:
"Though loud the call may be,
We'll call you louder to remain;
An X for every V
Those Blankton people offer you
We'll give to keep you here.
We trust you'll hear a voice divine
In our call so loud and clear."

With sobbing voice the pastor said:
"My duty is clear now;
I'll stay with you, beloved ones—
To heaven's will I bow;
So let us sing, 'Blest be the tie,'
And sing it loud and strong;
To leave you when you call so loud
Would be exceeding wrong."

Then in his study he sat down
A letter to indite
Unto the church at Blankton;
Thus did the pastor write:
"I've wrestled o'er your call with prayer,
The Lord bids me to stay;
And, consecrated to his work,
I dare not disobey."

The Secular Society, Limited.

REGISTERED OFFICE—376-7, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

THIS Society has been incorporated for the purpose of legalising the receipt, holding, and expenditure of funds for the promotion of Secularism. Its objects, as set forth in the Memorandum of Association, comprise every essential for which Secularists are striving. The governing idea of all of them is expressed in this primary clause:—"To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action."

The Society has powers to purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises; to employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants; to publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals; to assist other associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of its objects; to co-operate with any kindred Society in any part of the world; and to do any other lawful thing in furtherance of all or any of its said objects. To this end it is empowered to "have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society."

Intending members must be proposed and seconded in writing, and admitted by the Board of Directors, which consists of twelve members elected at the Annual Members' Meeting. Each member admitted pays an entrance fee of 10s., and after the first year of his (or her) membership a subscription of 5s. annually.

Persons of means who approve the Society's objects are invited to insert a clause on its behalf in their wills. This may be done without the slightest fear of misadventure. It would be well, although not necessary, to apprise the Board of Directors of such a clause having been inserted; or the communication could be made (in confidence) to the Chairman.

Without waiting for the realisation of such bequests, the Board of Directors appeal to members and sympathisers for donations, in order to push on with the Society's work.

At a successful *séance* in Cincinnati a man burst into tears when the medium described very accurately a tall, blue-eyed spirit standing by him, with light whiskers and hair parted in the middle. "Do you know him?" inquired a friend in a sympathetic whisper. "Know him? I guess I do!" replied the unhappy man, wiping his eyes. "He was engaged to my wife; if he hadn't died, he would have been her husband instead of me. Oh, George, George," he murmured, in a voice choked with emotion, "why did you peg out?"

Little Henry was in the habit of ending his prayers every night with a request for a baby brother to play with, but at last he gave up in despair. A few weeks later his mother called him and showed him twin babies. He looked at them in wonder for a moment, and exclaimed: "Well, it's a mighty lucky thing I stopped praying, or we might have got three."

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, Joseph McCabe, "The High Church Movement."

BATTERSEA BRANCH: Meetings every Monday at 8.30, at 8 Atherton-street, Battersea.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 16 New Church-road): Every Saturday, at 7, Debating Class and Social Club. Sunday, at 7.30, A. E. Elderkin, "The New Free Church Catechism: Its Teachings and its Omissions."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, H. Snell, "The Novels of Zola—Rome."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion; 7, Stanton Coit, "The Influence of Martyrdom."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Influence of Martyrdom."

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): A Parliament every Tuesday at 8. Thursday, March 23, at 9, C. Davis, "Shakespeare the Septic."

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, R. P. Edwards, "How to Read the Bible."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Messrs. Edwards, Heaford, and Pack.

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

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): H. Percy Ward—3, "The Gospel of Secularism"; 7, "How Christianity has Cursed Humanity."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; G. W. Foote—11.30, "Truth and Falsehood about Freethought"; 7, "Souls, Spirits, Ghosts."

DERBY BRANCH (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, W. H. Whitney, "Secularism."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—Mr. G. Faulkner; 6.30, J. Watson, "To John-o'-Groats with Wheel and Camera." Lantern illustrations.

GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row): Thursdays, at 8.30, Elocution Class. Sunday, at 7, Mr. Sterry, "What Christianity Demands Us to Believe."

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall, No. 2 Room): Mr. Trumper, "Might is Right."

LEICESTER SECULAR CLUB (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, R. W. Harvey, "Above the Snow-line." Limelight illustrations.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): E. J. Sale (of Birmingham)—3, "A Secularist View of the Bible"; 7, "Did God Make Man, or Did Man Make God?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. M. Robertson—11, "Education as a Right"; 3, "The New Intolerance: Scientific and Anti-Scientific"; 7, "The Indestructibility of Freethought." Tea at 5.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. F. Barnard, "The Folly of Philosophy."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, "Food and Health."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—March 18, 19, and 20, Stanley; 26, Sheffield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, S.E.—April 23, e., Edmon-ton. May 7, a., Victoria Park; 14, a. and e., Brockwell Park; 21, a., Victoria Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—March 26, Birmingham. April 16, Glasgow.

POSITIVISM.

"Reorganisation, without god or king, by the systematic worship of Humanity."

Information and publications on the Religion of Humanity may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

NON-POISONOUS PAINTS.

Resist all Atmospheric Influences. Samples Free. J. Greevz Fisher, 78 Chapel Allerton, Leeds; or S. R. Thompson, 25 Chatsworth-avenue, Walton, Liverpool.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 132 pp., 1s.; superior paper, cloth, 1s. 6d.

DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.

SHAKESPEARE. 6d.

THE GODS. 6d.

THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.

REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.

ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.

CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.

ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.

ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.

PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.

HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.

ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.

TRUE RELIGION. 2d.

THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.

LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.

LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.

GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC?

Part I. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC?

Part II. 2d.

FAITH AND FACT. Reply to

Dr. Field. 2d.

GOD AND MAN. Second reply

to Dr. Field. 2d.

THE DYING CREED. 2d.

THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION.

A Discussion with the Hon.

F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L.

Woodford. 2d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.

2d.

ART AND MORALITY. 2d.

DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.

THE CLERGY AND COMMON

SENSE. 2d.

SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.

SKULLS. 2d.

THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.

LIVE TOPICS. 1d.

MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.

REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.

REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.

CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.

CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE, TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 172 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

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

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

The trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. Other orders should be sent to the author,

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 35, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

Important Caution.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by some dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co." and "W. J. Rendell" being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell
No. 182,688.

In Red INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 3d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

Now Ready.

INGERSOLL'S GRAND NEW LECTURE ON SUPERSTITION,

Which is attracting immense audiences in America.

Forty-eight Pages.

Price Sixpence.

LONDON: R. FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER-STREET, E.C.

Ingersoll's Newest Lecture.

THE DEVIL.

Full of Wit, Humor, Eloquence.

In this Lecture Colonel Ingersoll replies to the preachers who have criticised his lecture on *Superstition* by saying he is attacking a man of straw. It is one of his sharpest and most convincing efforts.

Large Pamphlet. 1s. 3d., by post 1s. 5d.

Copies may now be ordered. The first supply expected to arrive from America on March 18th.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Materialism versus Theism.

Mr. Cohen and Dr. Keeling.

The book "QUERO," which has given rise to the recent discussion in the *Freethinker* between the above gentlemen, can be obtained, until the end of March, by written application, containing sixpence for postage (the only charge), to the Manager, Messrs. Taylor and Francis, Red Lion-court, Fleet-street, London, E.C.

The time has been prolonged because, owing to the book having run out of print, there has been some delay in supplying copies.

Price 3d., by post 4d.,

The Secular Almanack for 1899.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Contents:—Calendar for 1899.—The Future of Freethought. By G. W. FOOTE.—The Work Before Us. By CHARLES WATTS.—Outgrowing the Gods. By C. COHEN.—A Freethinker's Prophecy. By F. J. GOULD.—The Hooligans of Superstition. By A. B. MOSS.—The Unrealities of Superstition. By W. HEAFORD.—The Secular Society, Limited.—Information Concerning the National Secular Society.—Freethought Lecturers.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

PECULIAR PEOPLE

AN OPEN LETTER

TO

MR. JUSTICE WILLS

ON HIS SENTENCING

Thomas George Senior

To Four Months' Imprisonment with Hard Labor

FOR OBEYING THE BIBLE.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

ISSUED BY THE SECULAR SOCIETY (Ltd.), 376-7 Strand, London.

Price One Penny.

Copies can be obtained for free distribution at 2s. per hundred. Gratis parcels of copies can be obtained by N. S. S. Branches, &c., by applying to Miss Vance, Secretary, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C., or to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 3d., by post 4d.,

The Secularist's Catechism.

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

By CHARLES WATTS.

London: Charles Watts, 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Only a Few Copies Left.

FORCE AND MATTER. By LUDWIG BUCHNER. Reduced to 2s. 6d. nett; by post 2s. 10d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Thwaites' Household Doctor.

THE BEST BOOK

to have by you whenever you are not as well as you would like to be. Within its pages you will find a Treatise on most Diseases, and how to Cure them with Herbs, which are Nature's Remedies.

PRICE SIXPENCE—POST FREE.

G. THWAITES, 2 Church-row, Stockton-on-Tees.

List of Prices Free.

NOW READY, STOUT PAPER COVERS, 1s.; CLOTH, 2s.

THE BOOK OF GOD

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

With Special Reference to Dean Farrar's New Apology.
By G. W. FOOTE.

Contents :—Introduction—The Bible Canon—The Bible and Science—Miracles and Witchcraft—The Bible and Free-thought—Morals and Manners—Political and Social Progress—Inspiration—The Testimony of Jesus—The Bible and the Church of England—An Oriental Book—Fictitious Supremacy.

SOME PRESS OPINIONS:—

"A volume we strongly recommend.....Ought to be in the hands of every earnest and sincere inquirer."—*Reynolds' Newspaper*.

"Mr. Foote, the leader of English Secularism, takes the Dean's eloquence to pieces, and grinds the fragments to powder. If, occasionally, a seventeenth-century bluntness startles the reader of Mr. Foote's criticisms, his style, as a whole, is characterised by a masculine honesty and clearness that form a refreshing contrast to Dr. Farrar's over-jewelled diction.....Mr. Foote's treatment of the Dean is as skilful as it is emphatic."—*Ethical World*.

"A style at once incisive, logical, and vivacious.....Keen analysis and sometimes cutting sarcasm.....More interesting than most novels."—*Literary Guide*.

LONDON: R. FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER-STREET, E.C.

3 TONS In Weight of Manufacturers' Remnants.	Self-measurement Form.			3 TONS In Weight of Manufacturers' Remnants.
	COAT. <i>Inches.</i>	TROUSERS. <i>Inches.</i>	VEST. <i>Inches.</i>	
Length of waist.....	Round waist over trousers.....	Centre of back to opening.....		
Full length of coat.....	Inside leg seam.....	Centre of back to full length.....		
Half width of back.....	Full length of trousers.....	Round chest over vest.....		
Centre back to elbow.....	Round thigh.....	Round waist over chest.....		
Centre of back to full length of sleeve.....	Round knee.....	Please say if vest is to have collar or not.....		
Round chest, close to armpits, over vest, <i>not coat</i>	Round bottom.....			
Round waist, over vest.....	Lined or unlined.....			
	Side or cross pockets.....			

A good, strong, fashionably-cut, well-made
SUIT TO MEASURE FOR 27s. 6d. Carriage Paid.

Black, Navy, Brown, Fawn, Grey, or Slate Checks, Stripes, Mixtures, or Plain Colors.

Having just purchased over Three Tons in weight of Manufacturers' Remnants, all in good qualities, perfect, and present Season's goods, I am making a bold bid for a big rush of trade for the commencement of the Season. These suits are honestly worth 42s., and I strongly advise all my friends to fill up self-measurement form and secure one of these exceptional bargains at once. *Always remember* I return money in full where goods fail to give perfect satisfaction.

New Spring
Patterns
Now Ready.

J. W. GOTT,
2 & 4, Union St.,
Bradford.

AGENTS

Wanted everywhere for Clothing and Tea.

All widows left with children apply to me at once, and I will put something in your way by which you can easily earn 10s. to 12s. a week.

SEND POST CARD FOR A SET. FREE CLOTHING TEA knocks out all other teas in a fair competition, and secures you clothing for nothing.