

# Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

## More Boothism.

A FORTNIGHT ago we gave our readers some account of a "private and confidential" document of "General" Booth's, issued to his officers from headquarters. Our article was based upon Mr. Walter C. Hart's extracts from that document in the *Social Democrat*. Since then we have been favored by Mr. Hart with the loan of his copy, and we find that it contains much other matter of more special interest, perhaps, to Freethinkers than to Socialists.

According to the introductory note signed "William Booth," these fifty-six pages of Council Notes are "not sent forth as Regulations," nevertheless (he says) they "fairly represent my views and wishes on the questions under consideration."

The first section is headed, "The Army in Relation to the Churches." Booth tells his officers that their (or his) Army must be kept absolutely separate from all Churches and other religious organisations. "The Salvation Army," he says, "is not inferior in spiritual character to any Christian Organisation in existence." "Our Authorisation and Commission," he adds, "are directly from Jehovah," and "We hold the Keys as truly as any Church in existence." Attempts have been made to nobble the Army, but the shrewd "General" has foiled them all.

"The present Archbishop of Canterbury, when Bishop of Truro, the Bishop of Durham, then Canon Westcott, the present Bishop of St. Andrew's, the present Bishop of Rochester, and others, have pleaded with me at different times for union with the Church of England.

"The leading men in Wesleyan Methodism pleaded with me at one time to unite with them.

"The Congregationalists have again and again assured me that I should not want for money, if I would consent to some interworking with their Churches.

"In fact, to-day there is not a community outside the Roman Catholic Church that would not welcome us into unity; but I decline all such combinations."

This is very amusing. One can easily picture all those Churches—all, that is, except the haughty, disdainful Catholic Church—competing with each other to annex the popular and enthusiastic Salvation Army. One can also picture the shrewd smile on William Booth's face as he watches the competition. *Aut Casar aut Nulla.* "You are Free," he tells his officers, "and the basis of your freedom is the power of your General"—which is a remarkably fine piece of comic exposition. "You," he exclaims, "are the masters of the situation"—which is an easy transition from comedy to farce, for William Booth legally owns every scrap of the Army's property. In his fine, magnanimous way, he promises his soldiers that "this freedom" of theirs shall never be impaired. "You shall," he says, "while I live, go into bondage to no man." He might have added "except me."

Booth proceeds to give his opinion of the Churches, and it is very unflattering. He abhors Sacramentarianism, whether in the Church of Rome or a Protestant Church. It is as detestable as "the jingling tom-tom beatings and rowdyisms of Heathenism"—no reflection, of course, on the musical performances and pious ejaculations of the Salvation Army. Booth asks his own flock to look at the worldliness of the Churches.

"(1) While professing to be of Christ, see the worldliness of their Temples, Worship, Priests, and Liturgies. They told me in Scotland the other day of a chapel that had just cost £120,000 to hold 500 people.

"(2) While professing to be Christians, they pride themselves on station, wealth, and worldly influence and respectability. Church membership is becoming every day more and more a social question. It is "the thing" to go to church. The parsons in almost every land teach that it is the duty of every good Christian—for himself and his children—to make the best of both worlds.

"(3) While professing to be Christians, they follow the fashions of the world in their houses, dress, indulgences, amusements, and all else. No pretence to any other.

"(4) While professing to be Christians, they are mad on a worldly education. They make no pretence of training their children to become good soldiers of Jesus Christ, so that they may live and fight and suffer for Him.

"(5) While professing to have given up the world, they are linked up with every form of it. They are in closest association with its crowned heads, its statesmen, its warriors, however godless and worldly, or even vicious, they may be. Their leading ministers—bishops and dissenting ministers drawing £15,000, £10,000, and £5,000 a year salary—living in palaces. Followers of John Wesley in the ministry with private incomes of thousands of pounds a year, and followers in the laity with four and five times as much. . . . Indeed, they say by their lives and professions—in direct opposition to their Master—'You can serve God and Mammon.'

Capital! It is delightful to hear William Booth in this vein. Latterly all the Protestant Churches have taken to flattering him, and he returns the compliment by telling them that their Christianity is a frightful sham. Evidently all the real Christians are in the Salvation Army.

Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind. "Look," Booth exclaims, "at the avowed unbelief of the Church." He quotes from "a great Church of England divine" the statement that the Bible "contains innumerable mistakes." Then he turns upon Professor Drummond for saying that Science may explain sin as "the relic of the animal past of man." "See," he cries, "how Christians have helped to play ducks and drakes with the Bible." Then he goes on, in rollicking style—drawing upon his imagination or somebody's jocular figures, without the slightest attempt at accuracy—to state that 539 "various critical, unbelieving theories" respecting the Old Testament, and 208 respecting the New Testament, have "found support from leading ministers of various Christian Churches" during the last forty years. No less than 603 of these theories are "known to be totally deunct," having been "eaten alive by the remaining 144, which are now also feeding at a great rate on each other." This is a good sample of Booth's rather elephantine humor, though it is probably taken in all seriousness by his illiterate officers.

"The Theories still alive and countenanced include 'proofs' of the following:—

"The Creation in six days—*Quite impossible, Genesis all fudge.*

"The Deluge—*A mere nursery myth like Red Riding Hood.*

"Abraham and his offering—*A monstrous fiction.*

"Moses—*A Hebrew ideal—his writings; not his at all!*

"The Israelites crossing Red Sea out of Egypt—*An exaggerated account of a storm in which they get a severe wetting.*

"The Commandments.—*Pretty good. Very useful, but containing stupid errors.*

"The Prophets.—*Mostly written after the things happened, which they appear to have foretold—those things foretold that have happened; accidental—like Old Moore's Almanac.*

"The New Testament.—*Full of blunders. Dates wrong. Miracles—'very unlikely.' Jesus Christ—if God—left us very much in the dark.*"

Booth proceeds, in something like the *Freethinker* vein, to sneer at Archbishops, Bishops, and other clergy for blessing battleships, and sanctifying bloody wars in which the heathen are mowed down with Maxim's preparatory to stealing their land. He further sneers at the clergy who try to hold their congregations together by secular and even profane amusements. He mentions one church by name—Holy Trinity, Shoreditch—whose Athletic Club advertised a boxing competition, in which a six-round contest took place between two well-known bruisers, the tickets being threepence each. Booth wants none of this muscular Christianity in the Salvation Army, except at "chucking-out" time, when it is always handy.

Warming up to his work, Booth denounces other Christian denominations for "stealing" his converts. "Most of the officers who have left us in India," he says, "have gone to get big houses and better salaries." He damns the Church gold, and Chapel gold, and Mission gold that corrupts and buys his officers and soldiers. Drawing himself up to full prophetic height, he exclaims, "In the name of God and the Salvation Army, I pronounce my curse upon it."

A little later we find Booth girding at the Broad Church for insidiously sapping the foundations of belief. "Hell is not for ever," the Broad Church says; but Booth says it *is* for ever. He knows the power of that doctrine over feeble, credulous minds. It is the doctrine of first importance in the Christian faith. Let everlasting Hell go, or let it cool down, and what is it that Jesus Christ is to save us from?

We must note the delightful way in which Booth classes "drunkards and infidels" together; also that he aims at making the Governments of the world "pay us the cost of doing" the social work of the Salvation Army, and that Salvationists only must be employed in the said work; further, that reformatory work amongst the residuum is not really worth doing "unless to make them Salvationists."

G. W. FOOTE.

### God's Providence.

CATASTROPHES and cataclysms have always been a serious trial to the religious faith of men and women. Even when there is a loud cry that a shipwreck, a national calamity, or a disastrous earthquake is righteous chastisement inflicted by a justly-incensed deity, the very energy of the cry is often enough a good indication of the disturbed feeling underneath. The most ardent believer on such occasions is apt to wish that the actions of an all-wise deity approximated to human standards; and his plea that these things form part of a providential scheme for good is as often a narcotic to his own disquietings as it is a reply to the objections of unbelievers. While the stream of life flows along with tolerable serenity, and so long as we are not brought into close contact with the more painful events of human existence, the instilled belief in the existence of a wise and loving deity may still continue to exert its time-honored and time-discredited sway over the mind. It is when a sudden break in this order occurs, and we read of the destruction of hundreds of people, many of whom may have been leading lives that were blameless, and upon the continuance of which the happiness of families or even nations may depend, that the most robust faith begins to totter, and the dogma of Providence to appear a ghastly mockery in the face of facts. Many a man dates his first questioning of religion from such an event, and his doubts reflect far more credit upon his humanity than would the returning of thanks to God for his escape from a danger that had overwhelmed hundreds of his fellows.

The other day a writer in the *Spectator* was induced to pen a few reflections of a pietistic character on the subject of Providence and the Toulon disaster. Here, by the explosion, wilful it is supposed, of a large quantity of gunpowder, cordite, melinite, and other infernal compounds, by means of which Christian nations demonstrate the civilising influence of the religion they profess to follow, several scores of human beings were killed, and, if Christianity be true, sent either to heaven or

hell without the slightest preparation for the journey. Everyone, of course, condemns such an outrage, with its wanton destruction of life and property; and even if the excuse were offered that the perpetrator had some legitimate grievance against the Government and took this opportunity of gratifying his feelings, the obvious retort would be that, even granting the legitimacy of such methods of seeking redress, not the Government alone, but scores of people in no way implicated in the matter, were sufferers by such conduct.

Now it is obvious that, if we change the terms of the indictment, and instead of the Toulon magazine, with its supposed anarchist destroyer, substitute the world, with its imagined over-ruling deity, our logical judgment of, say, the recent hurricane in the West Indies, where, according to a Blue-Book just issued, over 100,000 people were left homeless and hundreds killed outright, must be exactly the same as it would be concerning the author of the Toulon disaster. If wholesale slaughter is wrong in the one case, it must be equally wrong in the other; if we are to condemn the man who, to gratify his revenge against those that have injured him, dooms to death numbers that have not, we must equally condemn the deity who, wishing to punish or correct a few for their misdeeds, scatters disaster or disease over the surface of an entire country. As the *Spectator* says, referring to the explosion: "If society puts to death the man who acts like this, must we not impeach the Providence which permits the act and sustains the arm of the miscreant who effects it?" It is with a view of removing this objection that the article is written, and its author displays enough scepticism to prevent his using the stereotyped religious verbiage on the subject, thus hiding from the superficial reader his paucity of reason under a cloud of rhetoric; but, at the same time, retains sufficient religion to render useless, or nearly useless, the scepticism he has imbibed.

A sense of the difficulties surrounding the Theistic view of nature induces the writer to attempt to turn the tables on the Agnostic or Atheist by the retort that the negation of a Divine Providence leaves the matter where it was. "If the tragedy was all without purpose, if it was merely due to molecular action, uncontrolled by any supreme spiritual power, are we any further? Does the Agnostic gain anything on that hypothesis? Obviously he does not." It may be admitted as true that, whether we view a calamity as due to the action of physical forces alone or as the result of physical forces controlled by a supreme intelligence, the objective fact of the disaster remains the same. The pain, the sudden death, the widespread distress caused to survivors, are all there; but, at least, Theism aside, that distress is not intensified by the reflection that all this might have been arrested by the Supreme Being who, the creeds teach us, is infinitely wise and powerful and good; nor is our misery deepened by the conviction that we are all in the grasp of a huge world-monster, who sports with human life as a cat plays with a mouse. We have all the same world to live in, the same pleasures and pains to court or avoid, no matter what our religions or non-religions may be; but these difficulties must surely be increased in strength and number if, in addition to the task of developing human intelligence to the point of controlling natural forces in the interests of human happiness, we add the task of reconciling the existence of widespread and unmerited disaster with that of a god wise and powerful enough to prevent it. One might well retort that the Theist is troubled with every difficulty that faces the Agnostic, with the additional difficulty of reconciling the existence of human misery with that of a living, watchful Providence.

In the next place we are told:—

"It is worth noting that it is only the unusual tragedies of the world that call forth expressions of doubt or positive unbelief. . . . Everyone at Lisbon, everyone at Toulon, had to die at some time; why not in one way as soon as in another? Is it worse to die suddenly than to die after months and years of protracted suffering? The victims at Toulon felt one tremendous shock, and all was over. But the victim of consumption in some dark city suffers a daily death, as it were. The patient in a cancer hospital can tell of a lingering agony which the thousands engulfed at Lisbon or in Ischia never knew. . . . It is a vulgar illusion which strains at the Toulon explosion, as being inconsistent with Divine Providence, and yet

swallows without difficulty the single, common, everyday tragedies of human life." It is a curious argument that, because we must all die sometime, therefore it does not matter when; or because we must all die in some way, therefore it does not matter how. Most people have a very emphatic desire concerning both the "how" and the "when" of dying, and that usually takes the shape of wishing the method to be as comfortable and the time as remote as possible. One might as reasonably say that it matters little, seeing life is terminable, whether a man is hanged at twenty or dies quietly in his bed at four score.

It is indeed true that it is the unusual tragedies of the world that evoke expressions of disbelief; but that can hardly be said to alter their character. All that it proves is the truth of the maxim, "Familiarity breeds contempt," and that the constant contemplation of injustice or suffering is apt to blind people to its presence. There is nothing more discordant with the conception of a Divine Providence in the West Indian hurricane than there is in the presence of the disasters of daily life; but then there is nothing less. A child ushered into the world suffering from hereditary disease, or a single case of unmerited suffering, is as much an indictment of Providence as an earthquake which destroys thousands. Suffering is not stronger because a larger number of people is involved; it simply appeals to our imagination with greater force. Hell itself, to use a religious phrase, could not have devised a more fiendish method of inflicting pain than many of the diseases that afflict humanity, and which, we are assured by the Prayer-book, are "certainly God's visitation." But the raising of this plea obviously does not remove the objection suggested by the occurrence of an earthquake; it simply enlarges it. It can only act as a reminder that not only the exceptional in nature, but the normal events of everyday life, are strongly antagonistic to the conception of an over-ruling Providence working in the interests of man.

Truly enough, if a man can retain his Theism in the face of the unnumbered tragedies of daily life, and reject it at the sight of an earthquake, he is straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. For, in presence of the misery and injustice of existence, the talk of "God's Providence" is more than questionable—it is a grotesque mockery. I remember once visiting a mother who had just suffered the loss of a little child. I found there a parent that the Lord had taken the child in order to convince its mother of the sinfulness of her sceptical opinions, and bring her nearer to him. It is not often that I have a strong desire to kick anyone, but I was painfully conscious of such a feeling on that occasion. Imagine what would happen if a man were to knock a child down in the hope of convincing its parent of the error of certain speculative opinions. The two cases are strictly analogous, and it is hard to see why the same judgment should not be delivered in either instance. Yet people go on year after year, and generation after generation, repeating empty phrases about "God's Justice," "Divine Providence," etc., as though they passed through life with eyes completely blind to its sights, and ears deaf to its teachings. We praise God for a good harvest, and refuse to blame him for a bad one; return thanks on recovering from a disease, yet refrain from complaining when others succumb. Yet surely it is as logical to inflict censure as it is to offer praise. Even religious people might sympathise with the farmer who, after a bad year, absented himself from the harvest thanksgiving service on the ground that he had no wish to approach his Maker in a spirit of sarcasm.

A kindred phrase was used some little time back by the Rev. Dr. Clifford. Speaking at a meeting of the Free Church Council, he defined its aim to be that of "establishing God's justice on earth." One would have thought that if God were specially anxious to see his justice established on earth he would hardly have required Dr. Clifford and his friends to assist him at the work. An almighty God who cannot get things as he would desire unless a council of Free Church clergymen volunteer to help him at the task is a picture the absurdity of which is only eclipsed by the realisation of what "God's justice" is as manifested in the world at

large. God's justice is shown in storm, in plague, in pestilence, in earthquake, in famine, and in disease. It is shown in the law of heredity, which, however much it may make for progress on the one hand, on the other punishes the newly-born child with mental and physical ailments that are the results of its parents' misconduct, and causes it to grow up a misery to itself and a burden to society at large. As a plain matter of fact, the less nature is controlled by human intelligence and sympathy—that is, the more it is left to God's guidance, the more repugnant to our notions of justice does it become. For it is man who corrects the inequalities and cruelties and injustices of the world. Sanitation diminishes the diseases that Providence creates or permits to exist; physical science teaches us how to control the forces that, left alone, would wreck or ravage human life; human knowledge and sympathy, growing with the experience and development of each generation, reduces the difficulties and miseries of existence. From all quarters the same lesson may be read. Man must, in the end, be his own savior; science the only Providence we can trust. It is that which has lifted man from barbarism to civilisation, and daily redresses the evils which "Divine Providence" inflicts upon the world. C. COHEN.

### Mr. Watts in America.

I LEFT Toronto about five weeks ago, and I confess it was with some misgivings as to the future of organised Freethought there. There is too much apathy among the Freethinkers in the matter of aggressive work. I hope that my visit there will stir them somewhat to further efforts. I urged upon the workers to bestir themselves, and I hope to hear that the movement will take on new life and vigor. The Freethinkers are undoubtedly increasing, but they appear to pay little or no attention to the necessity of organisation. The same can be said of the Freethinkers in the States. They are increasing fast, but are unorganised.

Just before I left Toronto I took a drive with an intimate friend, and, while out, caught a cold, which was followed by a severe chill. I paid little attention to it, and left for Chicago that evening.

On my arrival at Chicago I found I had a very severe attack of *La Grippe*, and was obliged to go to bed, where I had to remain for a whole week. I passed one of the most miserable weeks of my life there in the hotel. I had no opportunity to get around and become acquainted with the friends, who would undoubtedly have called and helped me to forget my illness to some extent, had they been acquainted with the fact. Dr. J. H. Greer did his best for me, and Secretary Reichwald, of the American Secular Union, called to see me occasionally, though a busy man. These two were the only ones who lightened my solitude, which was almost unendurable. The *Grippe* is a sickness which leaves a man in a low frame of mind at best. As I was due in Cincinnati to engage in a four nights' debate on the week of March 5, I managed to get on the train on the Saturday morning. During my trip to Cincinnati I was troubled with nervous tremblings, which increased on my arrival, and Dr. Wilson informed me that I was still a very sick man, and advised complete rest. I hoped to be able to carry on the debate, as the Freethinkers had done a great deal of work to advertise it properly, feeling sure, as one of them expressed it, that I would be able to "knock out" the parson.

Colonel Ingersoll was to lecture on Sunday evening, March 5, on "Superstition" in the Grand Opera House, and I obtained the consent of my physician to go and hear him, though I should, perhaps, have remained in the house. The Colonel lectured to an immense audience, standing-room being at a premium. He has lost none of his eloquence and popularity. The prolonged applause which followed the delivery of his many gems of thought was a pleasure to hear. The audience, better than any other illustration I could give, showed the power and extent of unorganised Freethought. My companions pointed out among the audience many of the most prominent citizens, nearly all of them unidentified with Freethought organisations,

but many of them known to be in sympathy with Secularism and Freethought. I had the pleasure of a social chat with the Colonel. He, seeing my condition, urged me to take the utmost care of myself, and not go upon the platform unless I felt fully equal to the task. Buoyed up as I felt at the time with the pleasant and agreeable events connected with his lecture and personal sympathy, I believed I would be fairly well upon the morrow; but, unfortunately, my expectations were not realised, and I found myself suffering from nervous prostration to such an extent that I could not go on with the debate on the Monday evening. The Ohio Liberal Society was obliged to obtain a substitute. No doubt you have all read Dr. Wilson's account of the debate, and there is little to add to his able review, which I perused before it was forwarded.

I may say, however, regarding the Rev. Isaac Selby, my opponent, that his style is that of the Salvation Army exhorter, but he is not a debater. I am only sorry that I did not have my usual vigor during the two evenings I took part in the discussion. However, the friends are satisfied with the result. The Ohio Liberal Society is an aggressive organisation, which keeps to the fore at all times, and has some earnest and able workers in its ranks. The Society has been organised since 1890, and has held public lectures ever since. On Sunday evening, March 12, I lectured for the Society in its regular meeting-place to a crowded and enthusiastic audience. My subject was "The Doom of the Churches." It was thoroughly appreciated, and drew forth many pertinent questions.

A vigorous controversy is at present going on in Cincinnati regarding the teachings in its University. The preachers, especially the Presbyterians, are denouncing some of the professors, alleging that they cast reflections upon Christianity, and are unsettling the beliefs of many of the Christian students. The *Commercial Tribune*, one of the leading dailies, has opened its columns to the disputants, and the Freethinkers in Cincinnati have not been slow to avail themselves of the opportunity to get our views before the public. Everything, from Catholicism to Atheism, is being threshed over, which is undoubtedly a very gratifying condition of things. Some of the preachers appointed a Committee to hear complaints against the teachings of the University, but the prospects are for a speedy adjournment of the self-constituted censors. No complaints have been filed with them. While in Cincinnati I was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Levi. Mrs. Levi was untiring in her attention, and, but for her careful nursing, I doubt if I should be in as good condition as I am.

I left Cincinnati, with the good wishes of many friends, on my journey to New York on Sunday evening, March 19, and am now the guest of Dr. E. B. Foote at Larchmont Manor, New York. While I am recovering I am very, very weak, but with continued careful nursing I hope to recover some of my usual health. If I should be fortunate enough to do so, I will fill some eastern engagements in about ten days. I do not think I shall go west again, much as I desire to do so. I wished to complete arrangements for a four nights' debate in Cambridge City, Indiana, but my unfortunate illness has caused a postponement. If I should make another western trip, I will fill this engagement. Many of the friends in the west are disappointed that I have not been able to give them one or more lectures, but my illness could not be helped.

There has been an epidemic of *La Grippe* here since November last, and it appears to have covered the entire United States. Scarlet fever and diphtheria have also been epidemic, and several of my engagements have fallen through on that account. Should my health not improve as rapidly as I wish, I shall leave for England the latter part of April at latest. Never having had a protracted illness before, it has been a severe hardship in every way.

As my engagements have been few, I have little to add in the way of further news and notes. I notice the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage has resigned from his church in Washington. It would be puzzling to know what he had to resign, except it was the taking of his salary. Still, Washington will no doubt go on quite as well, if not better, without him.

The newspapers all over the country have been publishing accounts of a lecture delivered at a meeting of

Methodist ministers in New York City, March 6. The speaker was a Rev. Mr. Cadman, and he made the statement: "The inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible are no longer possible of belief among reasoning men." Strange as it may seem, he was applauded by nearly all the ministers present. Among the stories the truth of which is doubted are the following:—

That the earth was created in six days.

That Methusaleh lived to the age of 969 years.

That Jonah was swallowed by a whale, in whose belly he lay for three days.

That the Red Sea was divided in order to permit the passage of the children of Israel out of Egypt.

That a snake tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden.

That Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and that it obeyed him.

The Tower of Babel narrative.

The turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt.

The story of Noah, the Flood, and the Ark.

That God spoke to Moses out of a burning bush.

That Aaron turned his rod into a serpent.

That Moses tapped a rock, and that water gushed forth.

That Moses drew forth his hand, and it was "leprous, white as snow."

That Elijah was translated to heaven in a chariot of fire.

That Elisha threw the mantle of Elijah across the Jordan, causing it to dry up and allow him passage.

That the earth opened up and swallowed Achen and his companions.

That Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked in a fiery furnace unharmed.

That David stayed unhurt in a lion's den.

The Rev. Mr. Cadman also stated that the authorship of half of the Old Testament was unknown, and that the Bible had been put together like any other book. He also asserted that the various books of the New Testament contradicted one another, and especially pointed out the difference in the various accounts of the resurrection.

We may ask what the reverend gentleman had left of Christianity when he was done. After having unburdened his mind and freed himself from the chains of many superstitions and the belief in impossible occurrences, we naturally inquire what foundation he thinks he has, if any, for his religion. But he must say something, and after so much good sense we find that he turns an intellectual somersault, and states that, even though all the accounts of the resurrection are at variance, Christ certainly rose from the dead. He admits the absence of proof, but says it "should never deter Christian men from believing in the Christ and his life." What shall we say of such an exhibition of clerical thinking—or lack of it? After having rejected everything essential to the proof of Christ's alleged divinity and perfection, he still asserts these, while admitting there is no evidence. Strange, indeed, would be the mystery of godliness, did we not bear in mind that any other statements would lose the preachers their pastorates. We may expect a heated controversy, especially in the religious press, over this lecture of the Rev. Cadman. The Methodist Church south, being extremely orthodox, will make it interesting for the Northern Churchmen, who endorse this overthrow of everything essential to their religion.

In one of my debates at Cincinnati I made the statement that a Free Lover could not be a Secularist. I have since then had the opportunity of meeting a number of those who call themselves Free Lovers or Social Radicals. I find that, as I see it, there are Free Lovers and Free Lovers. According to my understanding of this matter from those apparently qualified to speak, a Free Lover, in the best sense, is one who believes that men and women should regulate their relations without the control of any external authority, and who claim that they are the best judges of what is good for themselves in that regard. They also state that self-control, implying as it does responsibility, is bound to lead the individual to be extremely careful of the rights of others. The sovereignty of the individual, they state, implies as a necessary consequence the right to freedom from all external restraint in the relations of men and women. Love should be the only bond, and, when love is dead, they hold it is not only a mistake but a crime against the race to have marital relations, and that much of our disordered and morbid humanity is necessarily the result of the marriage superstition. The more intelligent and far-seeing consider that only through just economic conditions can

there be a permanent basis for a proper relationship of the sexes, holding that woman must be economically independent of man before children can be truly the result of proper selective love. They, however, work especially to give men and women the desire for freedom. With this class of Free Lovers I would have little quarrel, and, while I might differ from them in the practical application of their views in many respects, I believe they are honest, earnest workers for the betterment of humanity along secular lines.

The question of a free press has been brought to the front in Cincinnati recently. Mr. C. C. Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, was indicted for mailing matter to the authorities alleged was obscene and contrary to the postal regulations. I saw the indictment, and he was not even technically guilty in my opinion. He referred to the marriage relation, and stated in effect that love should be the basis of the marital relations only. Of course, while merely an expression of opinion, it was really, in a crude way, an advocacy of social freedom. Moore, however, disclaims strongly ever holding any such opinions, and I am informed that he is correct in his statement. At any rate, the law is not supposed to cover the opinion, but the language used alone, and the language was certainly not obscene. However, Moore appears to be hardly a credit to the Freethought cause, on account of the personalities he indulges in, and his lack of dignity, ability, and scholarship. He is not liked or much respected by the Freethinkers of Cincinnati, but they rallied, nevertheless, to the defence of a free press, in spite of their opinions regarding Moore's personality. They must be highly commended for this. Moore, unfortunately, did not notify anyone regarding the time of his trial, or ask for help, and none of the Freethinkers were able to get to work properly on his behalf until after he had been sentenced to the penitentiary for two years. He appears to be extremely egotistical, and refused to have the help of a lawyer, apparently not understanding the gravity of the situation or the principle involved in the affair. Since his conviction funds have been raised, and the case is being carried to the higher courts, where a new trial will probably be obtained, and the case given a fuller hearing and a proper defence submitted.

The judge who convicted Moore is a bigoted Christian, and the district prosecuting attorney did all in his power to prejudice the jury against Moore by calling particular attention to his infidelity. In this, "the land of the free," there is still much work to be done against Christian bigotry, and the price of liberty is always eternal vigilance. It is very probable that a pardon will be granted, provided a new trial cannot be obtained. President McKinley has been appealed to by prominent citizens. It is to be regretted that Moore did not understand the gravity of the issues involved. He allowed himself to be tried for an expression of opinion, and the prosecuting attorney to make the issue upon the question of the result of the expressed opinion, instead of upon the language used, which the statute, according to the lawyers, alone covers. By allowing himself to be sentenced for his opinions, he has established a serious precedent, which may be used in the future to cover opinions of the highest importance to the Freethought cause in this country.

CHARLES WATTS

### Address at a Child's Grave.

[On April 1, the day on which I took up my duties as Secretary to the Leicester Secular Society, it fell to my sad lot to perform the funeral office for a child. I believe that, whenever possible, such addresses should always specially relate to the life and character of the deceased; and I give the address at the grave of Frank R. S. as an illustration of the form which I think the discourse should take.]

#### *In the Chapel.*

DEAR FRIENDS,—We none of us could bear sorrow if we had never known joy. Joy gives strength to our spirit, and power to the fibres of our heart. And then, when the sorrow comes, we can play the part of men and women, and carry the sore burden. To-day is a day of sorrow; a day when we look at each other through our tears; a day when a little chair

is empty, a little voice is hushed, a little face missing from the household; and Frank R. S. lives with us only in our thoughts and in the affection which will move our souls until the last pulse of our own life has throbbled.

Now who shall help us bear this sorrow? and what wisdom shall enable us to see things beautiful even in the hour of death?

The secret of our strength lies in this; that for four years and eleven months—the whole short lifetime of this dear child—we gave him our love; and in giving him our love we made ourselves stronger. For in all the wide world, in land and ocean, in the immeasurable air and starry sky, there is nothing so wonderful, nothing so noble, nothing so mighty, as Love. To love a fellow-creature, even for a day, makes our nature more fine and pure; but to love a child, a man, a woman for many days, for months, for years—this it is which builds up the better part of our being, and teaches us the highest wisdom, and assists us in meeting the gloom and the grief and the bitterness of sickness and farewells. For the sweet magic which will sustain us in the day of sorrow we need not go to a book, or a priest, or a church. We may find it in the depth of our own soul. For the soul that has been consecrated by the presence of love is capable of passing through the valley of the shadow, and remaining brave, manly, womanly. The soul that has known the joy of love can grapple with all woes, all terrors, and all enemies. We loved this child, and that is the source of our grace and power.

Remember that death is only one of life's many sorrows. It is not our master, not our lord, not our conqueror. No sorrow can ever be so great, so masterful, so beautiful as human courage, human patience, and human love. Even if sorrow kills us, the courage which faces it is nobler than the force that kills. Even if sorrow wrings from us the cry of pain, the patience which bears it is nobler than the force that oppresses us. Even if sorrow takes away our sunlight and our starlight, the love which warms our stricken hearts is nobler than the force that puts our very life in prison.

Are we here in the presence of death? Ay, but we are in the presence of greater things than death. Our little Frank had suffered, and his young spirit was weary. Is his suffering, is his weariness, the great fact that confronts us? No, not at all. First, we should think of the child's love for his household friends, the love that swelled his heart towards the parents who tended him, and kept sad vigils in his time of need. We should think, also, of the courage, patience, and love of the father and the mother. Always in a household there will come gusts of passion, shadows of ill-temper and selfishness, unhappy moments when the cares of business make the world seem nothing better than a place of merchandise, greed, and cunning. But salvation enters the house when our hearts are chastened by courage, patience, and love; and then a lamp is lit amid the darkness, and our bread is eaten in peace and mutual kindness.

Now the house where this child lay in his sickness was made holy by the courage of his parents in their battle against pain and weakness; their patience in long watching by day and by night; and their love which smoothed his pillow, and eased his tired spirit, and which even now broods over his solemn rest. These sentiments rise above death, and give us mastery over the grave. Courage, patience, and love are qualities that grow out of our inmost nature. We are most manly and womanly when we display them in our daily life. And whether we live for one day or for an age, we can ask for nothing more splendid than the opportunity to be brave, patient, and kind. And though now we carry this dear child to the quiet earth, we shall not bury our love. In love we nursed him and cherished him; in love we gave him little gifts, and sent him to school, and dreamed of his possible future. In love, also, we go forth with him, that the place where he lies may be sanctified by our tenderest respect.

#### *At the Grave-side*

We give back this little body to the great mother which bears us all.

If, perchance, we think ourselves the poorer because this child has been taken from our fireside, let us reflect that our life has been made richer by his dwelling among

us. Even a child helps in the making of a better life. The presence, the laughter, the prattle and frankness of a child bring a blessing to a house, making us more generous, more thoughtful, more humane. In dealing with children we learn to exercise pity; we learn to stoop; we learn to think of that world around us which is really our larger self.

Now, if this child has thus enlarged our hearts, we that stand by his grave must not go away only to weep and lament. We must keep in mind the lesson he has, without knowing it, taught us. If ever we are inclined to think that human nature is selfish and self-interested, the child proves to us our error. For the selfish parent becomes unselfish towards his child; and the hard heart, that is locked against the world, opens at the touch of a child. And thus we see that, at the bottom of things, love is the mightiest of the forces that move the soul of man. Happy will it be for us if, to the sense and practical insight of men and women, we add the openness and straightforwardness of the child.

There is not, indeed, a wide difference between the years of a child and the years of an old man. One has beheld the sun a few more times than the other; but in the passing of the great ages the life of the infant and the life of the veteran are not far apart. If then, our time is short, let us see to it that we walk in charity and just dealing, and live in peace with each other. It is well for us to look into an open grave. Our thoughts are sobered, and we are awakened to the question, "What are you living for?" And the only things worth living for are justice and love.

In this spirit, then, and mindful of the religion which consists in doing good, we take our leave of the material form of this our dear one.

Farewell, dear child. The thought of you will be like an undying flower in the garden of our heart. Through storm and through shadow the memory of your face will ever shine. Your memory will keep our hearts more fresh, our hands more pure, our life more just. And so long as our hearts beat, we love you.

F. J. GOULD.

### The Gadarene Swine and the Devils.

A LOT of little demons once  
Desired their wrongs adjusted,  
And sought to quit their human home,  
With which they were disgusted.

They sought a change, and so resolved,  
As Exorciseman Jesus  
Was passing at that very time,  
To urge him thus: "Release us!"

"That herd of swine that's feeding there  
Will suit us just 'tip-top,' sir;  
We know of yore you have the power,  
Command! and in we pop, sir."

These rascals reck'd not what their choicē,  
So rashly made, would bring them;  
For who does know how pigs will go  
When they have the devil in them?

And now, possessed with hellish imps,  
Their inwards growing hotter,  
The swine assuage their burning rage  
By plunging in the water.

Just serve the dirty devils right  
Is what I thought to say, sir;  
But what's the good, when all the lot  
Are still alive to-day, sir?

S. HOLMAN.

### 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.

### Acid Drops.

"AN Every-day Man's Religion" is the title of a lecture delivered in the Secular Hall, New Brompton, by Mr. W. M. Thompson, editor of *Reynolds's Newspaper*, and reported at length in that journal. The lecture was much applauded by a large audience, and contained some capital passages. We cordially concur with the general drift of Mr. Thompson's discourse, but we are unable to agree with what he said about Jesus. Mr. Thompson remarked that the Prophet of Nazareth always taught kindness to the poor. Well, as far as he did so, he but followed the lead of all the Jewish prophets; none of whom, however, anticipated his silly advice to the rich to sell all they had and give the proceeds to those who were steeped in poverty. As for the "dignity attaching to the pathetic figure of Jesus," we are bound to observe that next to nothing is known about him, even if he was in any sense an historical character. The Jesus of the Four Gospels is a romantic creation, an ideal figure, born of early Christian imagination and developed through oriental mythology. Having become a God, he must ever remain so, just as a dethroned king cannot become a simple citizen. His place is in the Pantheon, not in the Historical Gallery.

Mr. Thompson declared that "the Salvation Army had done more good for the poor than all the Churches put together." That may be true, without amounting to much. As an economist, Mr. Thompson must be well aware that social emancipation can never be organised on a basis of charity. We believe, too, that if doing good for the poor means distributing other people's money amongst them, the Catholic priests and the parish clergy of the Church of England do far more of it than the Salvation Army. Both makes more noise about it—that is all. He is a splendid advertiser. Whatever he does is fully paraded before the public attention.

Rationalists ought to look at religious organisations like the Salvation Army without sentimentalism. All the great religious orders in the Catholic Church began very much on the William Booth plan, and what did they become? We should be on our guard against holding terms with falsehood because its professors happen to be good people, for emotion without reason—even the best emotion—is often the most dangerous thing in the world. Was it not Gibbon who remarked that, to a philosophic eye, the virtues of the clergy were more dangerous than their vices? Mr. Thompson has, of course, read his Gibbon, and will not resent our reminding him of one of that great writer's profoundest epigrams.

Rev. Mr. Clutterbuck, of the Wesleyan Foreign Mission Deputation to Guernsey, went down with the *Stella*. As the boat sank he was observed to be on his knees praying earnestly, with many passengers assembled around him. This gentleman was ostensibly on the Lord's business, and if prayer availed at all it ought to have been efficacious in his case.

The occupants of one of the *Stella's* boats prayed to the Lord to save them, and after drifting about all night they were picked up by a steamer at daybreak. They took this as an answer to their supplications. It did not occur to them that if the Lord was in a saving mood he might easily have diverted the *Stella* from the rocks on which she met her fate. In that case no lives would have been lost at all.

What vanity or selfishness it is, at bottom, to regard oneself as providentially saved in a disaster when scores of others perish! Who are they, forsooth, that God should take such a lot of trouble about them, and none at all about the rest?

Mr. George H. Lewis, a railway servant, died in his new during service in the Wesleyan Chapel at Ledbury on Sunday morning. To die in such a place, and on such an occasion, ought to ensure a through express ticket for glory. But how few Christians are there who want to go off like this lucky gentleman.

Patrick Donovan, a gardener, was at work in connection with the Easter decorations in St. Joseph's Retreat, Highgate Hall, when he fell from a ladder and smashed his skull upon the stone floor below. More "Providence."

The Rev. Dr. Horton, of Hampstead, was unwell, and his kind congregation insisted on his taking a long holiday. He took it. The result is that he is all right again. As little as possible was left to the Lord. Dr. Horton's congregation felt that praying for their minister's health was less efficacious than sending him to Italy.

The Rev. Dr. Bennie, vicar of Glenfield, Leicester, died suddenly of an apoplectic fit while attending to his clerical

duties. Instead of going to Italy, like Dr. Horton, he has gone to heaven. Yet the newspapers speak of his death as "distressing."

William Harrison Fowle, a Congregationalist minister, of Strood, came to London on Wednesday, March 29, and his "business" kept him so late that he missed the midnight train home. He seems to have been remarkably puzzled as to where he should lodge for the night, for at two o'clock in the morning, or "something after one o'clock" according to his own account, he got mixed up with "two dissipated-looking women," as the reporters describe them, in Great Eastern-street, Shoreditch. The reverend gentleman says that they asked him the time. He told them, and gave them some coppers. Presently he discovered that his purse containing five sovereigns was gone, so he called "Police!" and had the women arrested. Magistrate Cluer committed them both for trial.

Pastor Fowle wanted to prevent the publication of his name and address, but found he couldn't help himself. No doubt he is a very simple innocent; a man of God could hardly be anything else. But this lesson ought to be enough to prevent him from wandering about the streets of London between one and two o'clock in the morning, and getting into conversation with distressed females.

The Volunteers, who must be mostly professed Christians, choose Easter for their manœuvres. During the period of the celebration of the Resurrection of their Savior, who came to bring peace on earth, they practise themselves in the art of warfare. It is a very curious proceeding, but Christians were always inconsistent.

Vaccination is declining in London, but Sanitation is improving. And what is the result? Last year only five persons afflicted with small-pox were admitted to the London hospitals, and only one death from small-pox was recorded amongst nearly five million inhabitants. Small-pox is simply a disease of dirt, though the medical profession chooses to make it a perpetual bugbear.

The Rhyl Urban Council are endeavoring to acquire control of the foreshore, with a view to stopping the performances of teetotal lecturers and itinerant preachers. Naturally the Nonconformist Free Churches protest against "the control of free speech being vested in the Council," as it clearly ought to be vested in the Nonconformist Free Churches. Mwrog, a well-known bard, is in favor of interference by the Council. He complains of the "foreshore ranters" and "drunken teetotalers." As for the religious spouters, he says that if they printed their sermons they would blush for shame—that is, we presume, if they could read them.

There was a tremendous crowd to welcome the Sirdar on his arrival at Waterloo Station, and almost as big a crowd to welcome the boy Jagers who had succeeded in going to Chicago and back without working his passage. So much for fame and popular acclamations. It reminds us of the story told of Cromwell when he was setting out from London to remark about the rebellion in Ireland. A friend of his made a grimly reply that there would be a still bigger crowd if he were going to be hung.

We reproduce the *West Ham Herald's* report of the last Freethinker fight on the Town Council:—

The following motion stood on the agenda paper in the name of Alderman Fulcher:—

"That the resolution as to the *Freethinker*, passed by the Council on February 28, 1899, be rescinded, and that, as the exclusion of the *Freethinker* from the library tables, while the other religious journals are left on, is an act of religious intolerance which the Council cannot sanction, it is ordered that the *Freethinker* be allowed to be on the table until such other religious journals are removed."

This motion was not reached till late in the evening, and the Mayor stated that unless it was submitted without discussion he should allow it to stand over.

Alderman Fulcher: Well, I can't move it without saying something.

The Mayor: Well, I shall go.

Alderman Fulcher: Then I'll simply move it.

Councillor Scanlon: Mr. Mayor, I claim—

Alderman Athey: No speech; no speech!

The Mayor (using his hammer with energy): No, no, no.

Councillor C. Mansfield: Don't break the blessed furniture.

Councillor Bishop: I certainly—(uproar).

Alderman Athey: I move that the question be now put.

No speeches.

The question was then put. Fifteen voted for the motion, and twenty-seven against. On a division, the motion was lost by twenty-seven votes to fifteen. The list follows:—

For the resolution—Aldermen Athey, Fredericks,

Fulcher, and Hayday; Councillors Bissell, Coe, Davis, Devenay, Fraser, Godbold, Jacobs, R. Mansfield, Pert, Scott, and Terrett.

Against—the Deputy Mayor, Aldermen Fielder, Ivey, Kelly, Kidd, and Smith; Councillors Barber, Billows, Bishop, Boardman, Bothwell, East, Halsey, Harbott, Harris, Howard, Kettle, C. Mansfield, Picard, Scanlon, Skelton, J. W. Smith, Spittle, Spratt, Thorne, Threlford, and Ward.

Did not vote—Councillor Ambrose.

Absent—Aldermen Bethell and White, Councillors Alden and Rainey.

Alderman Ivey: I congratulate the Council on its good sense.

From the gallery: "The priest and the parson have done it," and "Mental Chloroform."

"Proletaire," who writes the Socialist and Labor Notes in the *Herald*, admits now what we pointed out at the first, that "the tactical error was in admitting the clerical deputation at all." To receive a deputation of men of God against the *Freethinker* was as absurd as it would be to receive a deputation of Secular lecturers against a Christian Evidence journal.

"It will be as well," "Proletaire" says, "to let the matter rest now." As well for whom? Why for the Labor party, of course. This is a point of party expediency, not one of principle, and they must decide it for themselves. It may be true that "it is utterly hopeless to reopen the subject during the present year." But we have the interest and honor of the *Freethinker* to defend, and we are carefully considering our next move in this struggle, so that whether we win or not a clear advantage may accrue to the Freethought movement.

The result is that the *Freethinker* remains in the Library, but is placed behind a screen, and can only be obtained on application. However, the end is not yet. West Ham will hear more of this affair. Meanwhile, we tender our heartiest thanks to Alderman Fulcher for his brave action, and to the eleven other members of the Council who stood by their principles.

Councillor Thorne voted with the bigots. This is strange action on the part of a leading Socialist, and it needs some explanation. Councillor Thorne writes to the *Herald*, however, that he is not going to try to justify his vote. He appeals to his seven years' record. But what answer is that to a specific charge of desertion of principle? A man accused of a crime, and standing in the dock, might just as well plead "Not Guilty" on the ground that he had not violated the law on most of the other days of his life.

The *Forest Gate News* is "pleased to see that the Mayor would have no discussion on the matter" of Alderman Fulcher's motion. Why pleased? Is it really the business of a Mayor to tell a Town Council what motions on its Agenda shall and shall not be discussed? Our contemporary hopes "that this matter will now be allowed to rest, and will not be periodically re-awakened." Dear, dear! How they do like awkward questions to rest! But what if they *won't* rest? Ay, there's the rub!

The late G. W. Childs, who conducted the *Philadelphia Ledger*, ordered that the name of Colonel Ingersoll should never be mentioned in his journal. This was very childish—if we may be pardoned an unavoidable pun. Ingersoll couldn't be shunted off popularity by such an ostrich device. He is more popular than ever, and G. W. Childs is—well, God knows where.

Henry Varley, ex-butcher and Revivalist, has been soul-saving in New Orleans, and a correspondent of the local *Times-Democrat* wants to know by what authority he sticks "Dr." and "Rev." in front of his name. A protest also is entered against Varley's suggestive trick of advertising addresses to "men only." This correspondent is Mr. Stephen H. Alison, who lectured for some time on Freethought platforms in England, and will doubtless be remembered by a good many of our readers. Mr. Alison writes us privately to the effect that he is settled down in New Orleans and is doing well, which we are glad to hear.

"The ominous decrease in the number of divinity students in Scottish Theological Halls" is the subject of a shrewd article in the *Edinburgh Evening News*. Principal Rainy has been trying to explain it, as the *News* says "superficially." Our contemporary proceeds to give its own explanation:—"If Principal Rainy could get from the students of the Free Church a real, honest confession of their faith, he would be painfully startled at the result. He would discover that the longer the students pursue their studies the farther they drift from the theology of the Church. If he followed these students on their ministerial career, he would discover that they were living double lives. Before their congregations

they pose as orthodox preachers expounding the Bible in the old-fashioned way, while among themselves they indulge in the luxury of opinions which no ingenuity can reconcile with the accepted creed. When too late, many promising young men find their mistake, and curse the day they enslaved their intellects to a dead creed. Promising lads, profiting by the tragic experiences of their elders, are refusing to enter the Church. This is the real cause of the falling off in the number of divinity students."

The National Union of Teachers, in its annual report, gives some pretty illustrations of how teachers are dismissed by the bosses of Voluntary schools. Here are a few samples: (1) Head mistress of a Voluntary school dismissed because she maintained friendly relations with the family of the squire of the parish, who was not on good terms with the vicar. (2) Head master of a Voluntary school dismissed because he refused to make a false entry upon the Managers' Return. (3) Head master of a Voluntary school dismissed because he declined to occupy a certain house to be rented from the vicar. (4) Master of a Voluntary school dismissed for not attending choir practice, which took place during his summer holidays, his attendances at such choir practices being unpaid."

The new Marriage Act came into force on April 1. It seems worthy of the day. Even the Nonconformists, who clamored for it, view it with disgust. When will our legislators learn that civic and religious marriage are two separate acts, that the first should be provided for by the State, and the second left to private taste and arrangement?

Mrs. Edgeworth David has written a book called *Funafuti; or, Three Months on a Coral Island*, which is published by John Murray. The island of Funafuti lies in the Ellice group, north-west of Samoa. The natives number a few hundreds, and are as light-hearted as nearly all the Pacific "savages." Missionaries have Christianised them, made them wear Sunday hats, and got them to read the Bible, which they take very literally. "A woman," says Mrs. David, "was unhappy in her married life, and appealed to the native magistrate to set her free from the husband who ill-treated her. The magistrate puzzled over the law as set down in the Bible, and finally told the woman that if she wanted to be divorced it was necessary for her, according to Christian law, to break the Seventh Commandment. She did."

The Sunday newspaper question still continues to agitate the religious world, or rather the Nonconformist part of it, for the Church parsons don't seem to be troubling their heads very much about the matter—perhaps because their livings are sure, while the Dissenting ministers depend upon congregations for their salaries. The Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Baptist Boards of Ministers—this time really three in one—have met at the Memorial Hall, and passed a resolution against the projected Sunday editions of the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail*. Not only is this a "new departure," which in itself is distressing to old-fashioned men of God with their faces turned towards the past, but it is also regarded as "involving a large increase of unnecessary labor, and tending still further to secularise the spirit and lower the moral tone of the community."

There would be something quite touching, if it were not so professional, in the view of these men of God that the "moral tone of the community" depends upon their teaching. Without them, of course, society would be morally rotten. They say or insinuate this on every possible occasion. But it is all nonsense. The average man of the world is quite as good as the average minister, only he doesn't pull as long a face over it.

The Bishop of London's brief utterance to a reporter on the Sunday newspaper question is nothing but vague twaddle. Dr. Clifford delivered himself of about half a column. Like his Nonconformist brother, Mr. Price Hughes, he protests against increased Sunday labor for journalists and printers, although he must know very well that it is the Monday papers that have to be prepared on Sunday. This fact throws a flood of light on the "sincerity" of Dr. Clifford's statement, that he does not oppose Sunday papers on Sabbatarian grounds. The truth is he does. The Sunday newspaper is a rival. He dare not say so, but he knows it all the same. It is a very usual thing for all sorts of men, including sky-pilots, to give any number of reasons but the real one for the course they are pursuing.

Dr. Clifford wants people—at least he says so—to do more serious reading on Sunday. So do we, but we want them to do some serious reading every day, and not one day in seven. Even as it is, however, a man, or a woman either, had better read a good literary or social article in a Sunday paper than go to church or chapel and listen to an average sermon, which is little more than a repetition of the solemn inanities that have done duty for generations.

When Dr. Clifford says that the law may have to be in-

voled to suppress Sunday papers, he is talking like a bigot. We are tempted to tell him that Nonconformists never understood liberty. All they mean by it is freedom for themselves as against the Church of England.

We knew that Mrs. Besant's Theosophy would carry her far, and we said so at the very outset, much to the disgust of some Freethinkers who didn't understand either Theosophy or Mrs. Besant. According to a *Daily Mail* correspondent at Calcutta, the lady has renounced the West altogether, and eats and lives like a Hindu, even sitting cross-legged on a carpet in the native fashion. She is working for the success of a Hindu college at Luxa, in the healthiest part of Benares, where secular instruction will be amply qualified with Brahminic theology. Perhaps the ex-Materialist will finish her earthly career by becoming a Hindu saint, and, after her death, a sort of minor deity in the huge Hindu pantheon.

In order to arrest the conversions from Catholicism to Protestantism the Catholic clergy of Vienna are circulating the old story that Martin Luther committed suicide by hanging himself. They also suggest that every Protestant is liable to come to the same sad end. Of course it is very wicked on the part of the Catholic clergy to circulate this falsehood, but the Protestants circulate similar falsehoods about Freethinkers. "Infidel Death-Beds" is part of the regular stock-in-trade of Protestant opponents of Freethought.

Dr. Parkhurst, the clergyman who runs the morals of New York, is casting a covetous eye upon the outer world. "All that the world needs," he declares, "in order that the unfruitful wastes of heathenism may be transformed into a blooming garden of the Lord is God and missionaries." This would read a good deal truer if "blooming" were deleted in favor of a stronger adjective beginning with the same letter.

A tramp has been sent to an asylum by the Sharnbrook magistrates. He thought the Devil was pursuing him—as if Old Nick would waste his time on a penniless tramp—and, hitting out at his Black Majesty, he broke a window. Martin Luther threw an inkpot at the Devil, but he didn't live in the nineteenth century, and was therefore perfectly sane.

It is a pity that Mr. J. F. Nisbet did not live to finish his book on *The Human Machine*. He was a writer of force and originality, and a pretty open Freethinker. This must have been apparent to all readers of his weekly "Our Hand-book" in the *Referee*. Mr. Sims lets his own cat out of the bag in wishing his dead friend farewell "for ever."

The writer of "Sporting Notions" in the *Referee* praises Fred Morley, of Sutton-in-Ashfield, the famous cricketer. After referring to the bad storm during Morley's voyage to Australia, the *Referee* writer says: "Morley's disputation with the sky-pilots I shall never forget. A contemptible crowd they were, these missionary folk, who showed nothing but cowardice and selfishness when danger was at hand. Morley marked them and their shortcomings, so they had a nice chance in endeavoring to bring him to their views. Moreover, they started badly on him, because he was a bit of a Materialist. So it was unlucky that they introduced the parable of Dives and Lazarus in proving that punishment or otherwise in the future state must be incorporeal, if I may put it that way. Morley wanted to know how it came about that under these circumstances 'Mr. Dives' suffered from thirst."

The Royal Maundy Charities were distributed at Westminster Abbey on March 30 to eighty men and eighty women, corresponding to the age of the Queen. Each man got about £4 and each woman about £3, and if they were selected on the double account of poverty and desert, the gifts were no doubt well bestowed, and the recipients duly grateful. But it was rather mean to choose "Wash Me Thoroughly" as the First Anthem in the accompanying service. Perhaps the cleanliness of the beneficiaries was not all that could be desired, but they might have been spared this public sarcasm.

Mr. G. R. Longley, parish clerk, committed suicide by taking carbolic acid inside the church of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge-avenue, Kilburn. The Bishop of London, however, does not consider that the church needs reconsecration, as the body was found in the porch, and not in the portion of the church actually used for public worship. Would it not be best, though, to make assurance doubly sure? There is always the off chance that the Holy Ghost has flown from the building.

Stand, oh, mankind, on thine own feet at last, thou overgrown child!  
And canst thou not stand—not even yet—must thou still fall to the ground  
Without crutches, then fall to the ground, for thou art not worthy to stand.  
—Hamletings.



Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 9, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London: 7.30, "What would Jesus Do?" April 16, Manchester.

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.

A. MARCHFIELD (Liverpool).—It is not true that Celestine Edwards ever debated with Mr. Foote, either at Liverpool or elsewhere. You can deny the statement point-blank whenever you hear it.

E. H. C.—Promising, but not quite up to the mark.

GEORGE POTTER.—Received.

S. HOLMAN.—We have read your verses, which have sufficient merit to show that you may do better in time. Recollect that writing well depends, for one thing, upon patient practice, just like doing anything else well.

JOHN YOUNG.—Shall appear.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—T. Thornett, 5s.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—T. Thornett, 5s.

J. T. B.—Pleased to receive your letter. Of course you cannot be expected to do much financially for Freethought on your small wages. We thank you for passing on your weekly copy of the Freethinker to other hands when you have done with it.

W. COX.—See paragraph. Your note was meagre, and we don't invent details.

W. G. MACFARLANE.—Thank you for sending the reverend gentleman our "Hot Cross Bun Day" article. Kindly let us know if he favors you with an acknowledgment. Thanks also for the cuttings. We are glad to hear from one who has been a reader of the Freethinker on four continents.

E. REDWOOD, Plymouth, asks us to call attention to the N. S. S. Branch meeting to be held to-day (April 9) at the Democratic Club, Whimple-street, at 8 p.m. Members and friends are earnestly invited to attend.

H. R. CLIFTON.—See paragraph.

WILLIAM WADDELL (Motherwell).—Hard work and indisposition together necessitate some negligences. Mr. Foote is almost quite well again, and will make up a parcel of books for your Branch Library.

F. T. COOMBE.—Received, and under consideration.

WEST HAM FUND.—John Harris, 7s. 6d.

LOUIS ORGAN.—Miss Vance's advice to you was personal, not official. The N. S. S. has not authorised anyone to advise applicants for exemption under the new Vaccination Act. That rather seems to be the function of the Anti-Vaccination Society. You should be very careful, and not strain at trifles unless there is a principle at stake. We have not taken legal opinion on the matter, but we should say a priori that the magistrates are not debarred from charging a small sum for the certificate merely because there is no such stipulation in the Act. You are a poor man, and cannot fight that matter out by yourself.

C. H. CATTELL.—Thanks for letter and cuttings. We are glad to have the information that the late Mr. Richard Cadbury, of so good fame, gave 30,000 Bibles to the scholars in the Birmingham Board Schools, with a request pasted outside that the boys and girls would read a few verses each day. It must have largely improved their morals if they have read the blue parts of the Book of God.

RECEIVED.—Public Opinion—Progressive Thinker—New York Truthseeker—New Century—Secular Thought—New Orleans Times—Democrat—Ethical World—Sydney Bulletin—West Ham Herald—People's Newspaper—Liberator—Stratford Express—Oxford Times—Blue Grass Blade—El Libre Pensamiento—Two Worlds—West Sussex Gazette—Freidenker—Torch of Reason—Boston Investigator—Free Society—Crescent—Freethought Ideal—Der Arme Teufel—Edinburgh Evening News—Isle of Man Times—Watford Observer.

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.

SCALES OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding 10 words, 6d. Displayed Advertisements:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE's lecture on "The Romance of the Resurrection" drew an excellent audience to the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. Mr. S. Hartmann presided, and some questions were asked and answered. Mr. Foote lectures there again this evening (April 9), taking for his subject, "What would Jesus Do?" This question is occupying a good deal of attention at present in the religious and semi-religious worlds.

Branches of the National Secular Society should be making preparations for the forthcoming Annual Conference which will be held at Birmingham on Whit-Sunday. The business sessions, morning and afternoon, are to be held in a large and commodious committee-room, and the magnificent Town Hall is secured for the public meeting in the evening. Notices of resolutions for the Agenda should be forwarded to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, as early as possible, and not later than the first week in May.

Mr. Foote will, of course, attend the Conference as usual. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Forder will also be present. No doubt Mr. Charles Watts will be there likewise. We have just heard from him privately. He is at Larchmont, which is delightfully situated about twenty miles from New York. He is there enjoying the hospitality of Dr. E. B. Foote, who is getting him into fit condition for the voyage home at the end of April. All his American engagements have had to be cancelled. We deeply regret that our old friend and colleague has had such a bad time of it on the other side of the Atlantic, where the weather has been shocking, and the influenza fiend has had such a terrible innings.

Mr. J. M. Robertson completed on Sunday the special lectures organised for the season by the Liverpool Branch. To-day (April 9) the Branch holds its annual meeting. A large attendance of members is requested.

The New York Truthseeker reproduces a considerable part of our article on the Death of President Faure.

Freethinkers in the Finsbury Park district are particularly requested to attend a meeting called for four o'clock to-day (April 9) at 8 Matthias-road, Newington Green. Arrangements are to be made for carrying on the lectures in Finsbury Park during the forthcoming season.

Mr. A. B. Moss debates on Wednesday evening (April 11) in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, with Mr. H. Quelch, the well-known Socialist. Mr. J. E. Dobson, of the Camberwell Vestry, will take the chair at 8 o'clock. The subject for discussion is "Socialism and Malthusianism."

Porth Freethinkers meet to-day (April 9) at 2.30 p.m. at 102 Birch-grove for the purpose of forming a Branch of the N.S.S. All friends of the movement in the neighborhood are invited to attend and co-operate.

Mr. John Glendinning, the actor, is the son of a Free-thinking father, and he himself makes no concealment of his "irreligious" opinions. Two or three months ago he and his wife gave some dramatic readings on a Sunday evening in the Leicester Secular Hall. Of course there was a crowded audience, who were delighted to hear from Mr. Glendinning, by way of preface to his readings, that he and his wife were both Secularists. We are very much pleased to see that Mr. Glendinning is gradually making his way towards the front in the theatrical profession. At present he is playing in Miss Wallis's company. His performance of the Duke—the principal male part, and that a fine one—in Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure" is spoken of very highly in the press. The Referee, for instance, writes of it as follows:—"Perhaps the best impersonation in the whole piece was Mr. John Glendinning's Duke—a character which the late great Macready always avouched he found more difficult to learn than any other he had tried of the Bard's. Mr. Glendinning, however, cannot have found it so; for he rolled his lengths trippingly off the tongue—and, indeed, made no bones of them. He has a fine voice, and a well-modulated; together with an absence of 'reserved force' which certain other actors—or so-called actors—of this kind of play would do well to emulate."

The Library World for April says:—"The difficulty in connection with the acceptance and display of the Freethinker, which has been agitating the Borough for some weeks past, has at last been settled by an agreement to place the paper behind a screen in the care of the librarian. At one time, so high was the public feeling expressed that it was actually proposed to take a poll of the ratepayers on the question of acceptance or rejection of this paper."

Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture on The Devil will be on sale at Mr. Forder's next week. It is well printed, and makes a handsome pamphlet. The price is sixpence. There ought to be a rush for this publication.

## Omar Khayyam.

WHEN, in 1859, Mr. Bernard Quaritch published the first edition of Edward Fitzgerald's version of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, the book seemed destined to be stillborn. The whirligig of time has brought its revenge, and in 1899 one of the events of the literary world is the publication at a popular price of Omar's wonderful poem.

Public appreciation of "The Astronomer Poet of Persia" has been slow but sure. Omar was never considered as a really great poet at all until Fitzgerald used the Persian poet's quatrains as material for one of the finest poems in the English language.

Omar's editors count, roughly, some five hundred quatrains, many of which are of doubtful authenticity. For, be it remembered, Omar's writings have been transmitted to us across some eight centuries. From these quatrains Fitzgerald made his wonderful *Rose of the Hundred and One Petals*: The English poet made the freest use of his own fancy. The modernity of the incomparable English version is due entirely to Fitzgerald. He selected, and he did not scruple to alter when he thought fit. He made Omar's verse richer with opulent epigram; he added venom to his blasphemies. "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," said his friend Tennyson, and the remark was no mere prettiness evoked by amicable generosity.

The story of Omar's life reads like a Persian version of the *Three Musketeers*. Early in the eleventh century of our era three Persian youths, who were attending lectures at the famous school of Nishapur in Khorasan, made a curious compact. Their understanding was that whichever of them attained to wealth should share it with the other two, and not preserve it for himself. These old-time schoolmates, singularly enough, were all fated to make a noise in the world; but the first of them to do so was Nizam ul Mulk, who became Vizier to Sultan Alp Arslan. He honestly kept to his word, and the two whom he assisted are even better known, at any rate in Europe, than himself. One of them was Hasan bin Sabbah, the founder of the sect of the Assassins. The other was Omar Khayyam, more correctly Abul Fath Omar bin Ibrahim al Khayyam. The last part of his name indicates his father's profession as having been that of a tent-maker.

Until very recently Omar's reputation in Europe depended mainly upon his revision of the Persian Calendar, which, in the words of Gibbon, is "A computation of time which surpasses the Julian and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style." The biographers, with unconscious irony, mention casually that Omar also wrote poetry. In 1859 Edward Fitzgerald gave the world his version of the quatrains. Henceforth the astronomer is swallowed up by the poet, and, as Swinburne well says, Fitzgerald made Omar one of the greatest of English poets.

Omar was a very learned man. He was the author of astronomical tables, and of a treatise on the extraction of cubic roots, and another on algebra. His mathematical masterpieces need not detain us here. They have been dealt with elsewhere by more competent hands. Omar's poems consist simply of quatrains, little epigrams of four lines apiece, arranged in alphabetical sequence. Like all Persian poetry, the subject-matter is praise of wine and women, with speculations in religion. Omar was an Epicurean. The way he enforces his Epicureanism is by praising wine, for he is a Persian and a Mohammedan, to whom wine is forbidden by his religion. In common with all really great poetry, Omar's work has from the first been interpreted by one school literally, but by the mystics each according to his mysticism. Fitzgerald discards the latter in favor of the former, and rightly refuses to read for "wine" "God," as suggested by a French translator, or to see in the lover and his goddess but a parable of the worshipper and his deity.

We find in Omar the use again and again of that art which thrills love poetry with a finer tenderness by keeping ever in mind the precariousness of the tenure by which we hold love from death. Thus:—

I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled,  
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears  
Dropt in its Lap from some once lovely head.

And this delightful Herb whose tender green  
Hedges the River's Lip on which we lean—  
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows!  
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

Omar was a Freethinker. Listen:—

Oh, threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!  
One thing at least is certain—*This* life flies.  
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;  
The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Lamentation, just as in Æschylus or Marcus Aurelius, or even the book of Job, is apparent in his poem:—

Yet, ah! that Spring should vanish with the rose,  
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close;  
The nightingale that in the branches sang,  
Ah, whence and whither flown again—who knows?

In one of the later quatrains, by the addition of two words, Fitzgerald has turned a commonplace idea into a fearful blasphemy:—

Oh Thou, who man of baser Earth didst make,  
And even with Paradise devise the snake,  
For all the sin wherewith the face of man  
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and take!

These are what Swinburne called the "crowning stanzas" of all Fitzgerald wrote.

We have a fondness for this old Persian poet, and across some eight centuries we reverently salute his memory. It is as a personality, even more than as a poet, that we like to think of this old-world Freethinker. Generation has followed generation, century has followed century; still the loom of time roars on. We, in a far country, speaking in an alien tongue, surrounded by other creeds, are fighting the same battle as Omar. In the pauses of the conflict we are nerved to fresh endeavor by hearing the singing of the nightingales of old Omar Khayyam.

MIMNERMUS.

## Richard Carlile.

How potent an instrument of progress is a free press; what havoc it works in the ranks of oppression, what hope and inspiration it imparts to the soldiers of freedom. It is the daily expositor of public opinion, of that force which moulds institutions and arbitrates every dispute. By it political revolutions are obviated, and peaceful advance is assured. Silently, yet surely, it settles every public question without appeal to senseless violence. It is indeed the safety valve of society, preventing explosion and ruin. Angry passions fret themselves to impotence, righteous indignation finds articulate utterance, and adverse opinions and principles confront in bloodless conflict under its benign sway. A free press is still more; it is the unflinching and invincible opponent of tyranny, which it ever strives to drag from its usurped throne, to strip of its lying pretensions, and expose to public abhorrence and disgust. Despots tremble before its persistent aggression, and invariably war against its very life. Napoleon dreaded one independent newspaper more than an army of foes; for the one could be seized, beaten, destroyed, while the other baffled all such movements; scotched it might be, but never slain.

In proportion as we value this possession, so ought we to be grateful to those who achieved it for us at the cost of personal comfort and public repute. Their number is great, and the memory of most must perish; but others will never be forgotten; their splendid championship or loyal devotion being their passport to deathless fame. These memorable ones are of two kinds—those who have adduced impregnable arguments for the cause, adorned with the eloquence of conviction, and those who have practically striven for it in actual warfare. Of the former John Milton is the supreme English type, of the latter Richard Carlile.

In England the ruling classes always dreaded freedom of discussion and criticism, and were ever ready to exercise a rigid censorship over the press. When arbitrary suppression was possible it was invariably employed; since then, until quite recently, invidious legislation has been resorted to. This century has witnessed the trial of each method and the final extinguishment of both. During the first twenty years of it high-handed acts of power were levelled against

authors and publishers; during the second twenty years stamp duties on newspapers were imposed to obstruct their sale amongst the poorer classes. Fortunately, both evils were broken down by the resolute opposition of noble-minded men, who valued "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, according to conscience, above all liberties"; of whom Richard Carlile was the noblest, the most sincere, the most intrepid.

Richard Carlile was born at Ashburton, in Devonshire, on December 8, 1790. Of his parents not much is known. His father possessed some talent as an arithmetician, and published a collection of arithmetical, mathematical, and algebraical questions. His trade was shoemaking, but he early quitted it to become an exciseman. Intoxication beset him in that profession, and he betook himself to teaching as a schoolmaster. Subsequently he became a soldier, and died at the age of thirty-four, "nobody's enemy but his own," leaving his wife with three infant children, Richard and two sisters. The widow was for several years in a flourishing business, but the hard times about 1800 greatly diminished it, and alternate sickness and poverty afflicted her. She was through all changes an indulgent mother and a virtuous woman. At the age of sixty she died, being supported by her son until then, from the time when he was able to earn a living for them.

Carlile's education was but scant; it comprised reading, writing, arithmetic, and sufficient Latin to read a physician's prescription. On leaving school he engaged in the service of Mr. Lee, chemist and druggist, in Exeter; but he soon left it on account of being put to do things deemed derogatory to his office. Following that he idled away three months at home, where he amused himself with coloring pictures to sell in his mother's shop. His mother's principal customers, says Mr. Holyoake, were the firm of Gifford and Co., which consisted of the brothers of that Attorney-General who had such extensive dealings with the son afterwards, in a different line. Carlile was then apprenticed to the tin-plate business, and, although he never liked it, he continued to work at it for many years. His apprenticeship lasted seven years and three months, and was marked by great hardships, and consequent conspiracies and rebellions. His master, a Mr. Cummings, allowed five or six hours for sleep, but no leisure for recreation. On being released from this galling bondage, he determined to forsake the trade as soon as possible; but for a long time he was compelled to follow it, and thereby earn his subsistence. After travelling in various parts as a journeyman tinman, he came to London in 1811, but he returned to Exeter the same year. In 1813 he was in London again, working at Benham and Sons, Blackfriars-road. During the interval he had formed an acquaintance with a lady who, after two months' courtship, became his wife, she being then thirty years of age and he twenty-three. This union does not seem to have been productive of great happiness. Mrs. Carlile was a woman of considerable personal attractions, and possessed all the business qualities necessary to a tradesman's wife. In after years of persecution she bravely stood by her husband's side and shared their ages disparate, their mental characters irreconcilably diverse. By mutual consent they parted in 1832. No blame is legitimately ascribable to either; their conflicting idiosyncracies were their misfortune, and not their fault.

During the years of his labor as a tinman, Carlile had not been mentally quiescent. He was ambitious to win a public reputation and to earn his living by his pen. Very early in life he had dreams of purifying the Church, which certainly needed purging. Heresy had not found a home in his mind, and necessarily his reforming tendencies concerned themselves with what he was acquainted. He relates how, in his youth, he gathered faggots to burn "Old Tom Paine," instead of Guy Fawkes, being then totally ignorant of Paine's writings, and, like other people, incensed against him by irrational prejudice. Not until 1810, in his twentieth year, did he even see a copy of the *Rights of Man*. But towards 1816 he read Paine's works and the writings of other reformers; his mind became excited by his newly-acquired ideas, and he essayed public life. Cobbett and other editors were plagued at first by his literary scraps, which were uniformly refused. But in the following

year, 1817, Wooller's *Black Dwarf* made its appearance, and, being more to Carlile's taste than Cobbett's *Register*, which did not go far enough for him, he determined to push it amongst the newsvendors, as the sale was very low. "The Habeas Corpus Act," says Mr. Holyoake, "was suspended, and Sidmouth had sent forth his circular; there was a damp amongst the newsvendors, and few would sell. This excited Carlile with a desire to become a bookseller. The story of Lackington beginning with a stall encouraged him. He resolved to set a good example in the trade of political pamphlets. Finding the sale of the *Black Dwarf* very low, he borrowed £1 from his employer, and invested it in one hundred *Dwarfs*, and on the 9th of March, 1817, he sallied forth from the manufactory, with his stock in his handkerchief, to commence the trade of bookselling. He traversed the metropolis in every direction to get newsvendors to sell the *Dwarf*, and called every day to see how they sold. He inquired also after Cobbett's *Register* and Sherwin's *Republican*, but, finding that they did not want pushing, he took none of those round. Indeed, he refused to avail himself of the profit he could have made by taking Cobbett's *Register*, because it did not go far enough. He carried the *Dwarf* round several weeks, walking thirty miles a day, for a profit of fifteen or eighteen pence. At length an information was lodged against the publisher, and Mr. Steill was arrested. Carlile at once offered to take his place. Mr. Wooller, however, arranged the matter, and Carlile's offer was declined. Mr. Sherwin, then a young man editing the *Republican*, perceived Carlile's value, and offered him the publishing of his paper, which he accepted. Carlile guaranteed Mr. Sherwin against arrest, which left him free to be bold without danger. The shop on which he now entered was 183 Fleetstreet, which Mr. Cobbett afterwards occupied. Carlile's first ideas of politics were, that neither writers, printers, nor publishers were bold enough; and he now commenced to set the example he thought wanted."

Those were stirring times, and Carlile stepped into the ranks of publishers just at the moment when his sturdy independence and resolute will were needed to stem the torrent of Government prosecutions. The Tory Government made war upon the press, and to effect its designs furnished up every rusty instrument of tyranny. "It is difficult," says Knight, "to imagine a more degraded and dangerous position than that in which every political writer was placed during the year 1817. In the first place, he was subject, by a Secretary of State's warrant, to be imprisoned upon suspicion, under the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Secondly, he was open to an *ex-officio* information, under which he would be compelled to find bail, or be imprisoned. The power of *ex-officio* information had been extended, so as to compel bail, by an Act of 1808; but from 1808 to 1811, during which three years forty such informations were laid, only one person was held to bail. In 1817 numerous *ex-officio* informations were filed, and the almost invariable practice then was to hold the alleged offender to bail, or, in default, to commit to prison. Under this Act Mr. Hone, and others, were committed to prison during this year. To complete a triple cord with which the ministers believed they could bind down the 'man mountain' of the press, came forth Lord Sidmouth's Circular." Sidmouth's famous Circular to the Lords-Lieutenants of Counties, urging the importance of preventing the circulation of blasphemous and seditious pamphlets, stated that he had obtained the opinion of the law officers, "that a justice of the peace may issue a warrant to apprehend a person charged before him, on oath, with the publication of libels of the nature in question, and compel him to give bail to answer the charge." This was practically a deprivation of every particle of liberty, and placed every writer at the mercy of informers and unpaid magistrates. It did away with trial by jury, and substituted for it the arbitrary caprice of judges. Earl Grey, in the House of Lords, asked: "If such be the power of the magistrate, and if this be the law, where are all the boasted securities of our independence and freedom?" These proceedings were the most daring invasion of public liberty that had been attempted since the time of the Stuarts. The reformers, however, stood firm; only one fled—William Cobbett. But no cowardice dictated his movement. He sacrificed an incredibly profitable business, and

departed with his family to America, being determined not to be gagged by judges, or magistrates, or Secretaries of State. There he continued to write his *Register*, the first numbers of which, dated from Long Island, preserve as an indelible brand on the oligarchy the story of the Last Hundred Days of English Freedom.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

### A Good Friday Invocation.

O HOLY ones, O pals of Christ,  
Who long have pondered carefully  
How best to mourn the Sacrificed  
Religiously and prayerfully,  
Help us to-day—your deeds our guide—  
To suffer with the Crucified.

Content and peace this Friday bless,  
Gay glows the sunlit scene to-day;  
The earth in her resplendent dress  
Of vernal bloom and green to-day  
Is brighter decked than any bride—  
Because the Lord was crucified.

The brilliant sky and sunshine bright  
Set birds a-warbling gleefully,  
And crowds, like butterflies bedight,  
Will soon be jogging spreefully,  
Proclaiming (clearly) far and wide,  
"To-day the Lord was crucified."

Arouse ye, godly Christian folk,  
And give yourselves to jollity  
Till absolutely stonybroke  
Through feasting and frivolity;  
Lest, Christian folk, it be denied  
That Christ to-day was crucified.

Awake! ye thirsty Christian men,  
And don your loudest toggerly;  
Consume a double breakfast, then  
Betake ye to the groggery.  
Drink deep, the infidel to chide  
With hiccups for the Crucified.

Come forth, ye lads and lasses, too,  
In Springtime gear splendiferous;  
Packed tight in boats high wassail do,  
And make the air vociferous.  
Hilarious o'er the water glide  
Condoling with the Crucified.

Arise, ye Sunday-schools, and show  
Your pity, love, and piety;  
Abroad in gay procession go,  
Hurrah and houp-la-liety!  
With tea and buns at eventide  
Mourn mightily the Crucified!

Come forth, ye multitudes untold,  
Ye bought-with-blood élite of him;  
Come forth, ye myriads who hold  
That Romans made cold meat of him.  
Wild Saturnalian whirlwinds ride  
In token Christ was crucified.

Such sympathy beyond belief,  
With Christ the slain, deserted one,  
Such passion of insatiate grief  
Consuming each converted one,  
Shall surely smite all doubt aside  
That God to-day was crucified.

Good Friday, 1899.

EX-RITUALIST.

[These verses should have appeared in last week's *Freethinker*; they would have been more seasonable then, but they are not without interest now.—EDITOR.]

### A Bradlaugh Anecdote.

How deep-seated was universal prejudice against Bradlaugh the following story will show. The very last people in the world to be repelled by anyone's religious or anti-religious opinions were surely "George Eliot" and George Henry Lewes. Yet I well remember that when describing an evening at the Hall of Science, the latter observed laughingly: "I verily believe, Polly," thus he usually called his companion, "that our friend has a sneaking fondness for Mr. Bradlaugh." The speech, good-naturedness itself, evidently implied tacit cause for astonishment, the notion that such sympathy was hardly credible, hardly admissible, in a well-regulated mind.—Miss H. Betham-Edwards, "Reminiscences," p. 216.

### An Oriental Book.

If we once fully recognise the Bible as an oriental book, we are on the road to its complete comprehension. Its grossness of speech, its gratuitous reference to animal functions, its designation of males by their sexual attributes even on the most serious occasions, its religious observances in connection with pregnancy and birth, its very rite of circumcision; all this, and much more, becomes perfectly intelligible. It is in keeping with all we know of the ideas, practices, and language of the East. Moreover, we perceive why it is that similarities to the theology, the poetry, and the ethics of the Bible have been so liberally disclosed by the progress of oriental studies. The Bible, being brought from the East, has to be carried back there to be properly understood. It is true that Christian divines have offered their own explanation of these similarities. At first they declared them to be Satanic anticipations, devilish pre-mockeries, of God's own truth. Then they declared them to be confused echoes of the oracles of Jehovah. Finally, they declare them to be evidences of the fact that, although God chose the Jewish race as the medium of his special revelation, he also revealed himself partially to other nations. But these explanations are alike fantastic. They rest upon no ground of history or evolution. The real explanation is that the Bible is one of the many sacred books of the East. Its differences from the rest are not of kind, but of degree; and any superiority that may be claimed for it must henceforth be argued upon this basis.

This oriental Bible is at utter variance with the vital beliefs, the political and social tendencies, and the ethical aspirations, of the present age. Science has destroyed its naive supernaturalism; reason has placed its personal God—the magnified, non-natural man—in his own niche in the world's Pantheon; philosophy has carried us far beyond its primitive conceptions of human society; our morality has outgrown its hardness and insularity, however we may still appreciate its finer ejaculations; even the most pious Christians, with the exception of a few "peculiar" people, only pay a hypocritical homage to its clearest injunctions; and the higher development of decency and propriety makes us turn from its crude expressions with a growing sense of disgust, while the progress of humanity fills us more and more with a loathing of its frightful wars and ruthless massacres, its tales of barbaric cruelty, and its crowning infamy of an everlasting hell.

—G. W. Foote, "The Book of God."

### A Call to Quit.

Seeing that his audiences were becoming smaller every Sunday, a minister of the Gospel broke off in the midst of a sermon, descended the pulpit stairs, and walked on his hands down the central aisle of the church. He then remounted his feet, ascended to the pulpit, and resumed his discourse, making no allusion to the incident.

"Now," said he to himself, as he went home, "I shall have, henceforth, a large attendance and no snoring."

But on the following Friday he was waited upon by the Pillars of the Church, who informed him that, in order to be in harmony with the New Theology and get full advantage of the modern methods of Gospel interpretation, they had deemed it advisable to make a change. They had therefore sent a call to Brother Jowjectum-Fallal, the World-Renowned Hindoo Human Pin-Wheel, then holding forth in Hoopitup's circus. They were happy to say that the reverend gentleman had been moved by the Spirit to accept the call, and on the ensuing Sabbath would break the bread of life for the brethren, or break his neck in the attempt.

—Ambrose Bierce, "Fantastic Fables."

### The New Testament.

Here the holiest book of prayers,  
Weal and sorrow, see?  
At its portal stands and stares  
God's adultery.

—Nietzsche.

Goodman—"Did you ever hear about the three wise men who followed a star?" Grayboy—"No. Where was she playing?"

### The Press and War.

If the mass of even civilised mankind were not, as Carlyle said, mostly fools, great relief could no doubt be rapidly attained by saving the immense sums now squandered on armaments unparalleled in human annals. And the removal of all fear of war would be even a greater gain than the suppression of war-budgets. But men must pay for their follies and passions; and they do pay, heavily enough. The cost of indulgence in international jealousies and hatreds, even between European countries at the present day, would be difficult to exaggerate; and even one of the supposed choice products of civilisation, a free and popular press, has become a large source of evil. It is hardly saying too much that the main occupation of most of the newspapers of Europe is to inflame international animosities. Over and over again war has been barely averted between nations whose populations had every interest, and probably every desire, to keep the peace, but which had been worked up to a pitch of fury against each other by the incendiary fustian served up to them by their daily newspapers. We narrowly escaped war with France, when diplomatic complications ensued after the Orsini conspiracy; and how nearly we grazed a fratricidal war with our American kinsfolk, after the affair of the Trent, dwells in all memories. Whatever difficulty trained diplomatists may have had to settle either of these disagreements, there can be no question that they were greatly aggravated by the incessant pouring of oil on the flame of international discord by the newspapers of all the countries concerned. The greatest misfortune which Europe has experienced in modern times—the war between France and Prussia—was largely, if not wholly, brought about by the reckless mendacity and venom of the Parisian press; which, untaught by experience, seems again disposed to repeat its unpatriotic blunders. Not that I think the French press more evil-minded than the press of other countries; it is only more clever, sparkling, and stimulating, and therefore more dangerous, than its rivals in other lands.

—James Cotter Morison, "The Service of Man,"  
Preface, pp. 15-17.

### Book Chat.

We have received from Peter Eckler, publisher, 35 Fulton-street, New York, a copy of *The Wilderness of Worlds*, by Mr. G. W. Morehouse, a well-known American scientist. The author proceeds to give an account of the solar system, after which he relates the history of a planet up to its end and extinction. Mr. Morehouse has a thorough command of his scientific materials, and unusual powers of lucid exposition. He contrives to make the driest parts of his subject interesting. His book deserves a wide circulation, and should find a public on this side of the Atlantic. Mr. Morehouse is thorough-going in his anti-supernaturalism. He dismisses the idea of "an intelligent power or creative force back of, or outside, matter." "There is no evidence," he says, "of the characteristic caprice of intelligence in the always uniform order of nature." Monism is the true conception of the universe. "The material universe," he says, "is all there is of it, but in the broad sense it is potent and living material."

The principal item in the *Positivist Review* for April is the opening article on "Danton," by Mr. Frederic Harrison, with reference to the two biographies of the great Revolutionist that have just appeared simultaneously in England from the pens of A. H. Beesly and Hilaire Belloc. Mr. Harrison points out that Comte regarded Danton as "the greatest of the chiefs of the revolutionary movement, both in intellect and in character—indeed, as the only statesman among them of real insight and noble nature." Danton was a pronounced Freethinker.

The followers of the "Prince of Peace" in this country do not worry themselves much about the Peace Crusade, and Mr. Stead's journalistic baby, *War Against War*, has, in consequence, died of want of circulation, aged three months.

The most important literary event of the present month is the publication by Messrs. Macmillan, at the price of half-a-crown, of Edward Fitzgerald's incomparable version of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.

With *Studies in Some Famous Letters* (Thomas Burleigh) Mr. John C. Bailey makes his first appearance as a writer of a volume of essays in criticism, though critical papers from his pen have been published any time the last few years in most of the leading reviews and magazines. There can be no doubt that all, or nearly all, of these essays merit their being gathered into one book, where the critic's judgment can be followed consistently, and more fully appreciated. Mr. Bailey has really caught something of the spirit of the

old writers, and when he introduces us to such delightful letter-writers as Edward Fitzgerald, Gibbon, Swift, Charles Lamb, Cowper, Gray, Dr. Johnson, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the reader of these scholarly essays will find it easy to surrender himself to the author's judgment, and, in the case of some of the writers referred to, will be infected by Mr. Bailey's well-bred enthusiasm.

There is always something very attractive about considered studies of the personalities of great writers; the man who knows little of the subject under treatment is able to gain secondhand useful knowledge of "the immortals," while the student is able to contrast his own judgment with that of the essayist. To all such we cordially recommend Mr. Bailey's *Studies*. The book is a most invigorating literary tonic.

The *Fortnightly Review* for April contains the first of a series of articles on "The Origin of Totemism," by Mr. J. G. Frazer, the author of the *Golden Bough*. The serial story, "The Individualist," draws to a conclusion, and, we presume, will shortly appear in book form, when we confidently expect to find Mr. "Wentworth Moore" will be revealed as our old acquaintance, W. H. Mallock. The *Fortnightly* includes the inevitable article on the so-called "crisis" in the Church of England.

Mr. Charles Sheldon, the author of *In His Steps*, is as unpractical as Jesus Christ. He neglected to copyright his works, and, although his books are selling in England by thousands, he does not receive any profit. Mr. Sheldon would have pardoned that compositor who set up that beautiful text, "Now Barrabbas was a publisher."

Farrar's *Life of Christ*, which some humorist once called "Cook's Guide to the Gospels," is about to be issued at a popular price by Messrs. Cassell & Co.

The *Westminster Review* for April contains two articles on the Ritualistic crisis in the Church, which ought to satisfy the most exacting laymen on the subject of ecclesiastical millinery. In the Independent section Mr. Charles Hills writes on "The Injury Inflicted on the Working Classes by the Sunday Opening Movement," and a paper on "Maurice Maeterlinck," "the Belgian Shakespeare," helps to make a good issue of this veteran review.

### Correspondence.

#### A MODERN RESURRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—An incident that took place in this county during the terrible famine in 1848-49 came under my notice a short time since, and, as it throws some light on similar occurrences, perhaps you would give its recital a place in your columns. It took place in Skibbereen, County Cork.

A well-known character, whose *soubriquet* was "The Commissioner," fell into dire want like thousands of his fellow countrymen, became poorer and poorer, and at last died of starvation. Not only did he die, but both his legs were broken so as to make his corpse fit into one of the Government coffins, which, I presume, were made for adults; but, as "The Commissioner" was an unusually tall man, they had to resort to this expedient. I believe he was taken in the coffin and thrown into an open ditch that contained hundreds of other corpses; but, wonderful to relate, he crept into town next morning, and lived to clean shop windows and run light messages for over twenty years afterwards. This story can be verified. Yet we hear of millions of people giving their assent to the miraculous in a similar instance, even when it is well known that crucifixion is not by any means fatal.

AGNOSTIC.

Cork.

### Religions of Error.

Hearing a sound of strife, a Christian in the Orient asked his Dragoman the cause of it.

"The Buddhists are cutting Mohammedan throats," the Dragoman replied, with oriental composure.

"I did not know," remarked the Christian, with scientific interest, "that that would make so much noise."

"The Mohammedans are cutting Buddhist throats, too," added the Dragoman.

"It is astonishing," mused the Christian, "how violent and how general are religious animosities. Everywhere in the world the devotees of each local faith abhor the devotees of every other, and abstain from murder only so long as they dare not commit it. And the strangest thing about it is that all religions are erroneous and mischievous excepting mine. Mine, thank God, is true and benign."

So saying, he visibly smuggled, and went off to telegraph for a brigade of cutthroats to protect Christian interests.

—Ambrose Bierce, "Fantastic Fables."

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

### LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "What would Jesus Do?"  
 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, J. M. White's Dramatic Co. in the farciful comedy of "David Garrick."  
 CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 16 New Church-road): Every Saturday, at 7, Debating Class. Sunday, at 7.30, A lecture.  
 EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, F. A. Davies, "Shakespeare the Sceptic."  
 PECKHAM DEMOCRATIC CLUB (Rye Lane): Wednesday, April 12, at 8, E. Pack, "Miracles."  
 SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "The Personality of God."  
 WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Poetry of Mr. Kipling."  
 WEST LONDON BRANCH (15 Edgware-road): April 11, at 9, General Meeting.

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, R. P. Edwards.  
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, E. Pack.  
 HAMPSTEAD HEATH (near Flagstaff): 3.30, R. P. Edwards, "Christianity and Secularism."  
 KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, E. Pack.  
 MILE END WASTE: 11.30, S. Jones.  
 THE TRIANGLE (Salmon Lane, Limehouse): 11.30, F. A. Davies.  
 STRATFORD (The Grove): 11.30, A lecture.  
 VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.15, Stanley Jones.  
 WESTMINSTER (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, H. Courtney, "Some Recent Illustrations of Christian Charity."

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): C. Cohen—3, "Christianity and the Jews"; 7, "Religion: Is it either Truthful or Useful?"  
 CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, J. M. Robertson, "Christianity and Character."  
 GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Joseph McCabe—12, "The Origin of Life"; 6.30, "Why I Left the Church of Rome; or, Rome and Reason."  
 GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row). Thursdays, at 8.30, Elocution Class. Sunday, at 7, J. W. de Caux, J.P., "The Flood."  
 LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Annual meeting.  
 MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, J. Mayoh, "Agnosticism: 'What it Is.'"  
 SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "Vaccination: Is it a Delusion?"  
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business Meeting; 7.30, A Reading.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—April 9, Birmingham; 16, m., Limehouse; a., Victoria Park; 23, a., Victoria Park; e., Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road; 30, m. Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Athenæum. May 3, Mile End Waste; 7 and 14, Manchester; 21, Birmingham Conference.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, S.E.—April 11, Debate with Mr. Quelch; 16, Bolton; 23, e., Edmonton. May 7, m., Clerkenwell, a., Victoria Park; 14, a. and e., Brockwell Park; 21, m., Mile End; e., Victoria Park; e., Stratford. 28, a., Hampstead Heath. June 4, m., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 18, a. and e., Brockwell Park; 25, m., Battersea.

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

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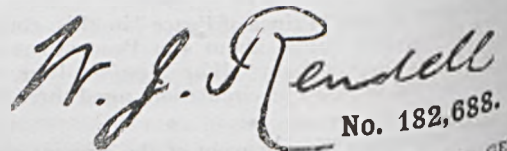
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