

# Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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## Ingersoll Echoes.

WE are still awaiting the American papers, principally the *Truthseeker*, for full particulars of the death and funeral of Colonel Ingersoll. No doubt the body was cremated. We understand that Ingersoll had a decided preference for that process. Of course it does not much concern the dead, but it makes a considerable difference to the living. Cremation and burial both involve the decomposition of the corpse; but cremation is quick, clean, and wholesome, while burial is slow, dirty, and noxious.

Ingersoll has been called the Bradlaugh of America. Many newspapers have called him so since his death. And in one sense they were right. Ingersoll was the great leader of militant Freethought in America, as Bradlaugh was its leader in England. Both were big men and great orators, and both had served in the army. But that is the end of the resemblance. The two men were cast in very different moulds. Bradlaugh was essentially a man of action. He would have been a great figure in a revolution. Ingersoll was a thinker and a dreamer. He was satisfied with the expression of his ideas. His eloquence was of another order than Bradlaugh's. Although not a poet in the creative sense of the word, he had a high degree of the poetic faculty, and it gave beauty and splendor to his orations, besides adorning them with a vast wealth of illustration, which is the life of popular discourses. Ingersoll had a keen and delicate literary sense, and Bradlaugh had next to none. Our great English leader had wonderful sheer strength, and well-nigh unerring practical judgment. Ingersoll had plenty of strength too, but it was clothed with the graces. He was extraordinarily full of what for want of a more accurate designation, we call human nature—elemental humanity. We are not seeking to weigh Ingersoll against Bradlaugh, or Bradlaugh against Ingersoll. We revere them both. But we say they were very diverse, and neither could have done the work of the other. Nor do we think they could have quite understood each other. They met once, we believe, but they did not form any close friendship. We do not think Ingersoll's name is mentioned in Mrs. Bonner's biography of her father; at any rate, it does not appear in the commendably full index to those two admirable volumes.

We said last week that the English newspaper notices of Ingersoll were on the whole very indifferent. The other afternoon we accidentally met Mr. Harry Snell on the top of a tramcar, and he remarked that it was astonishing how the newspapers had "boycotted" so great a man. "Not so astonishing, is it?" we replied; and Mr. Snell, bethinking himself, smiled a significant assent.

The organ of the Ethical party in England gives Ingersoll one paragraph. It is admitted that Ingersoll's personality "has an interest" even for Ethicists who were not in sympathy with his work. His direct propaganda, we are told, was "anti-theological—negative." "Some men are born to destroy," the writer says, "others to build up." That is the difference between Ingersoll and the Ethical gentlemen. Nevertheless there was a redeeming feature in Ingersoll's "destructive Secularism," for it showed "the working of the new humanist ideal of life." But the greatest praise of Ingersoll, after all, is that "in his own life he

vividly presented our ethical ideal of character and conduct." *Our* ethical ideal! We suppose Ingersoll borrowed it by anticipation. And now he is dead it is claimed by the rightful owners.

Ingersoll once said that he would rather stand up drunk at the day of judgment and say he wrote "A man's a man for a' that" than stand up sober and say he was an elder in a Presbyterian church. This is the sort of utterance that makes your academic moralist feel like a passenger who is a poor sailor on board a tub of a steamer in a storm in the English Channel. But it is the sort of utterance that rejoices the heart of your natural moralist—the man perhaps with a hundred failings, but who has in him the living root of good fellowship.

That living root of good fellowship was in Ingersoll above all men we ever knew. He made no pretences, never played the pharisee, but just did good as naturally as the sun shines. Looking at his face was better than hearing a Christian or even an Ethical sermon. He did not forego innocent indulgences in order that "weaker brethren" might be snared into self-control. He was incapable of thinking so meanly of them, or so flatteringly of himself. He drank his glass of wine, smoked his cigar, wielded a cue over a billiard table, and played a game of cards. He enjoyed his life. But no man was less selfish. He overflowed with sympathy. He could give money with princely generosity, and never say a word about it; he could make people happy who were around him; he could say the kind word that half-staunches a bleeding heart; he could even speak—hardest of all—the good word that kindled self-respect in the midst of abasement.

Let us tell a story now which we could not tell while Ingersoll was living. We had it from the lips of the man whom he helped. It was a young Englishman, who ran away from his family and roughed it in America, where he heard Ingersoll lecture. He was utterly broken at last, and in want of food. Just then Ingersoll happened to be lecturing in the town where he was. He had no sort of acquaintance with the great orator, but he had seen him and heard him, and was sure he had a good heart. So the poor starveling plucked up his courage, and went to see Ingersoll, and told him of his misery. He was assisted at once; but that was little. Ingersoll gave him a letter to a friend of his in New York, and that friend gave him work and full wages, although he had but a slender knowledge of the trade. In a few months he had made good progress, and he then asked his employer how it was that he had been paid wages he had not earned. His employer answered: "Oh, I thought you knew. Didn't you read Mr. Ingersoll's letter?" He had not done so, and the letter was produced for his inspection. Ingersoll had asked his friend to give the young man work and full wages, and added, "What he doesn't earn charge me."

Was not that splendid? What thoughtfulness and tact in the generosity! And from all we hear this is but one instance in thousands of Ingersoll's great-heartedness.

Another fine story is told of Ingersoll in Mr. Keir Hardie's paper, the *Labor Leader*. We reproduce the entire paragraph in which the story occurs:—

"The death of Robert G. Ingersoll robs the Freethought movement of its brightest ornament and America of its greatest orator. 'Colonel Bob,' as he was popularly called, had long outlived the obloquy



which thirty years ago was inseparable from a militant championship of Secularism. The courage, sincerity, and straightforward honesty of the man, the purity of his life, and the extraordinary goodness of heart which he displayed towards every form of suffering, won him the respect and admiration of even the bitterest of his religious opponents. He made money freely in his profession, and spent it lavishly in charity. A friend of his told me the following incident as illustrating this side of his character. A young man had been foolishly led into some Stock Exchange speculation, and had used 1,500 dollars of his employer's money. The speculation turned out a swindle, and the young man, in great distress of mind, told Ingersoll, to whom he was an entire stranger, the facts, and implored his aid. At the moment he had not a dime to spare, but it happened that he had been offered, and had declined, 2,000 dollars for an article on some political question then agitating the public mind. Asking his visitor to call again, he set to work, and wrote out a two-column interview with himself, and when the young man returned he sent him with this to the newspaper office, where the money was at once paid, and a young life was thus saved from destruction. Colonel Ingersoll had a kindly feeling towards Socialism, and saw clearly that the modern developments of Capitalism made its advent a necessity. His end was painfully sudden, the great heat inducing apoplexy, to which he succumbed. Not the Secular movement only, but every other which seeks to widen the limits of human freedom, is the poorer by the loss of Colonel Ingersoll."

Mr. Keir Hardie, by the way, is not quite accurate in his statement of Ingersoll's attitude toward Socialism. It is easy enough to show from Ingersoll's speeches that he regarded Socialism—that is to say, State Socialism—as the certain enemy of human liberty. Of course he may have been mistaken, but that was his view, and he ought not to be misrepresented.

The London *Echo*, the other evening, gave Ingersoll a paragraph in the midst of its Church news. It remarked that "the Colonel had a large following about twenty years ago." No doubt he did. But he had a still larger following twenty years later. Perhaps the *Echo* writer does not know—or perhaps he affects *not* to know—that Ingersoll's audiences were bumpers during the winter and spring of 1899. Even as late as June 2 his last address on *What is Religion?* drew a crowded meeting at Boston. All the standing room was occupied.

Ingersoll's methods of sceptical criticism, according to this *Echo* writer, are now "largely out of date." "A more enlightened attitude," we are told, "on the questions of inspiration and the historic credibility of the Mosaic books has recently weakened the force of his criticisms." But this merely means, if it means anything, that Ingersoll became a little old-fashioned because he had inoculated the clergy with his own views; which looks more like success than defeat for *him*, whatever it may be for *them*.

This *Echo* writer seems to imagine that Ingersoll did nothing but lecture on the Mistakes of Moses, whereas he lectured on almost every aspect of Christianity, and on all its fundamental doctrines. But this is the way of Christian apologists. They have always been fond of the tactics of the ostrich. They imagine that they are not seen because they won't see. But they *are* seen, and seen *through*.

The *Christian World* commits the same mistake as the *Echo*. While admitting his high character and "virile eloquence," it complains that "his attacks upon the Bible and Christianity were of the narrowest range, and were confined mainly to pointing out what he called the Mistakes of Moses." Anyone who will take the trouble to look at a collection of Ingersoll's printed lectures will soon see the absurdity of this complaint.

The *Two Worlds*, a leading Spiritualist journal, speaks of Ingersoll's "marvellous talent as a platform orator," and calls him "a fearless opponent of sham, of bigotry, and of superstition." This is good as far as it goes, and we wish it had stopped there. But our Spiritualist contemporary goes on to say that Ingersoll now knows

what is on the other side of death, and adds that "undoubtedly we shall have some communication from him which will prove the reality of his existence in the world beyond." No doubt you will. But why *you*? It would be more appropriate, and more like Ingersoll, if he communicated with his own friends and followers. They, and not you, are the people to whom he should, and naturally would, impart his new-found information. And if he does not communicate with *them*, his communications to *you* will lie under the very gravest suspicion.

That pious fable about Ingersoll's being "silenced" at Toronto, twenty years ago, by a man in the gallery who struck up "Hold the Fort," was first printed in the London *Daily Mail* as from "a correspondent." It is now going the round without this explanation, and myriads of Christians will probably think it as true as gospel—which perhaps it is. In such cases the wish is ever the father to the thought.

Ingersoll was all in favor of the war with Spain when it became inevitable, but he was not in favor of conquest and oppression by the United States. Considering that he belonged to the Republican party which is in power under President McKinley, his utterance on the Philippines question, only a week or so before his death, does him infinite credit. This is what he is reported as saying in the *North American*, of Philadelphia:—

"I do not want the Philippines unless the Filipinos want us, and I feel exactly the same about the Cubans. We paid twenty million dollars to Spain for the Philippine Islands, and we knew that Spain had no title to them. The question with me is not one of trade or convenience; it is a question of right or wrong. I think the best patriot is the man who wants his country to do right. The Philippines would be a very valuable possession to us, in view of their proximity to China. But, however desirable they may be, that cuts no figure. We must do right. We must act nobly to the Filipinos, whether we get the islands or not. I would like to see peace between us and the Filipinos; peace honorable to both; peace based on reason instead of force."

The *New Age*, an organ of Christian Socialism, mildly suggests that Ingersoll's work was not "all evil." Then it goes on to say that Ingersoll "regarded Henry George as a man sent from God." This is really the funniest Ingersoll story we ever heard.

"Put a Colonel Robert Ingersoll," says the *Sheffield Independent*, "face to face with a thoroughly educated, up-to-date Christian man, who knows the truth about the historical and ethical foundation of Christianity, and the assailant's strength is paralysed." Ingersoll crossed swords with Mr. Gladstone and Cardinal Manning, and it was not Ingersoll who was paralysed. Presumably, therefore, Mr. Gladstone and Cardinal Manning were not thoroughly educated and up-to-date Christians.

Gladstone's tribute to the great American Freethinker (by the way) ought not to be forgotten. "Colonel Ingersoll," he said, "writes with a rare and enviable brilliancy."

Ingersoll's admirers and lovers on this side of the Atlantic will ever regret that his death deprived them of the opportunity of seeing him in the flesh and hearing his noble eloquence. Many of them have sent us most touching letters on this subject. But they must resign themselves to the loss. After all, perhaps, it is not so much a matter for tears that Ingersoll died before the first approaches of senility. A private man may linger on beautifully in the midst of his children and his grandchildren, and totter down smilingly to the grave. But a public man might well wish to go earlier. Shakepeare died after writing his glorious *Tempest*, in the majestic maturity of his genius. One shudders to think of him lagging upon the stage of life, and writing feeble productions. Better drop suddenly like the tropic sun. "At one stride comes the dark." That is how it came to Ingersoll. And in spite of grief and tears it may be best.

G. W. FOOTE.

**Pain and Providence.**

IN the history of religion pain and fear have played neither inconspicuous nor unimportant parts. They have been both a help and a hindrance to it. A help, inasmuch as pain, present or prospective, has been a powerful instrument for impressing religious beliefs on man; a hindrance, because the presence of suffering in a God-governed world suggests to the developing conscience insuperable difficulties in the way of retaining those beliefs. Trouble, said Aristotle, first set men philosophising, and all investigation into the early history of religion goes to show what a large part blind, unreasoning fear plays in its development. Early man worships his gods for pretty much the same reason that a Russian peasant bribes the tax-gatherers—he is afraid of them. Indeed, it seems a fair assumption to make that if the conditions of existence had been such that life to each was one long stream of pleasurable experiences, terminating with an equally painless death, had suffering, injustice, or disease been unknown to man, religion at most would have been a mild speculative set of ideas, about which people would trouble themselves no more than they do about the inhabitants of Mars.

Feuerbach has shown, with deadly accuracy, that the joys of heaven are built up from the miseries of earth. One is the reverse side of the other. It is the physically and mentally morbid specimens of the race who dwell most upon the necessity of a future life; the miserable and oppressed who build upon its compensating qualities. The most impassioned advocates of religious beliefs are usually those who would be classed by a competent physiologist or mental pathologist as neurotic. The strong, healthy, and happy members of society may accept these beliefs, but they do not dwell upon them. They are content with this life, and feel least the necessity for any other; and it is not without significance that ministers of religion habitually speak of trouble as sent to "bring man nearer to God," or of periods of sickness as the most favorable time for the adoption of religious beliefs.

Of the immense service rendered to Christianity by the doctrine of hell it is, perhaps, needless to say much. This, too, has shown the same characteristic of being as great a help to earlier generations of Christians as it has proved a hindrance or a burden to later ones. In the earlier centuries of Christianity there was nothing revolting in the idea that pain should be inflicted upon man by God, or that, as in the case of Job, Jehovah should deliver up a man to be tormented by Satan, in order to decide a test of strength. To all criticism the Christian could reply, with Paul: "Who art thou that should deliver up a man to be tormented by Satan, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" This reply was, no doubt, satisfactory at one stage of human evolution; but gradually it began to dawn upon people that, after all, the power of the potter over his pots was subject to certain moral limitations; that if God wanted his pots better he should have made them better; but to damn them here and hereafter for being as he left them was an exhibition of bad temper brought about by his own bungling.

As has often been pointed out, the whole "Problem of Pain" is a problem the existence of which is directly due to the Theistic hypothesis. To the evolutionist there is a problem of pain only in the same sense that there is a problem in any other direction—that is, there is simply the task of understanding the conditions of its existence, not that of reconciling it with preconceived views. Indeed, in a scientific inquiry, the problem is not so much to discover how pain and evil came into the world as it is to discover how goodness and happiness came. That life should cease to exist is far from wonderful, but that amid the infinite possibilities of wrongdoing animal life should have become so organised as to perpetuate itself is as wonderful as a man's finding his way through a swamp by means of an almost invisible footpath. The ethical problem is essentially one of the evolution of happiness, not one concerning the existence of pain.

But with the Theist the case is vastly different. He starts with the theory of a God whose existence should

exclude evil, and then spends all his time in the attempt to solve a "problem" that owes its existence to this belief in a deity strong enough and wise enough and loving enough to prevent injustice and suffering, and yet who does not do so. Once reject this gratuitous hypothesis of an omniscient and omnipotent deity, and the difficulty no longer exists. The Theist clings to his theory, with the result that his whole time is taken up in trying to remove a difficulty created by his own unwarranted belief.

The earlier phase of this apologetic process took the form of a dualistic theory of the universe. There were two powers, God and Devil, who, between them, shared the responsibility for all good and evil. So far, so good; but this was obviously saving God's benevolence at the expense of his omnipotence. Moreover, the difficulty was not removed; it was merely evaded for the moment. If God were really the creator of the universe, the hypothesis, as Mill said, paid him the doubtful compliment of being the devil's author, and thus left him still responsible for all the evil in the world. If, on the other hand, Satan existed as an independent power in the universe—independent, that is, both in origin and continued existence—then God ceased to be the creator, and both were reduced to the position of rival monarchs quarrelling over the possession of a territory that existed apart from and independent of either. In each case insuperable difficulties presented themselves; the same in substance, even though the form may have undergone some slight modification.

But nowadays the devil has gone out of fashion. Ninety per cent. of the clergy never mention him; the rest frankly declare their want of belief in his existence, and, generally, one hears his name only on the lips of those whose manifest ignorance is the clear condition of their religious convictions. Only one attempt has been made of recent years to resuscitate him; but even the clever author of *Evil and Evolution* does not appear to have met with much success in his self-imposed task. Instead of shifting all the faults of the world on to the shoulders of the devil, the modern believer is compelled to deal with the subject along lines of natural science, and these apologies generally fall under the following heads.

The most general and the most popular met with nowadays is that which, on lines of evolution, professes to discern a beneficent purpose in the existence of pain. To the non-theological mind, looking back over the myriads of generations of animal life that have lived devouring and being devoured, at the ceaseless struggle for life, at the loathsome diseases and deadly parasites that afflict humanity, it seems next to an impossibility to regard all this stress and slaughter as being the expression of an all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving God. But the theological mind works along different lines. If the world were full of happiness, the Theist would exclaim, "See the obvious manifestation of God's love!" As it is not full of happiness, he is equally ready to find the same benevolence in an exactly opposite set of conditions. We are glibly informed that the present method of nature's working "is the only one which enables man, with his present nature, to lay plans in the business of life likely to be successful" (McCosh); that "it has pleased God of his great and stupendous love to us men to permit us to be the subjects of pain and disease..... His great and gracious rule has been hitherto in all the ages to let these agencies of pain and disease work out the grand purposes of redeeming and raising our race from a state of mere animal or vegetable (!) existence into a high, social, moral, and spiritual life" (Voysey); and, finally, that, while the complete development of man is impossible in the absence of pain and disease, their presence as manifested in the struggle for existence is at bottom "the most beneficent provision that the condition of things admits of."

We may pass by the opinion that an omnipotent and all-wise God is tied down to one plan only, nor need we discuss the "stupendous love" of a being who manifests his "gracious rule" through the agencies of pain and disease. All that need be pointed out is that no one has ever disputed that, *under present conditions*, pain does produce a certain amount of good to someone and in some direction, although the people who benefit by the suffering are not always those who suffer, nor does the benefit derived always correspond with the suffering

experienced. All that such statements involve is the bald truism that, given the present constitution of the universe, and it is impossible to see how development could be secured without the infliction of pain. But this, obviously, does not touch the root of the objection. The objection is that, given a deity of the kind posited by the Theist, suffering should not be; and it is simply an evasion of the criticism to reply that some benefit is derived from the suffering. The old difficulty still confronts the Theist, and with all the old force—accentuated, perhaps, by the modern scientific temper. Either God could have brought about the same results by a different method, or he could not. On the first assumption you limit his goodness by saying that he deliberately chose that things should be as they are; on the second you limit his power by asserting his inability to prevent the pain and disease of the animal world, and at the same time reduce him to a subordinate position by conditioning him with forces or materials that defy his power of manipulation.

Nor is it of any use to plead that suffering results in the production of a higher type of being, both physical and mental. To render this plea of any value it would be necessary to show what purpose is served by elaborating a semi-perfect organism as the result of ages of suffering and slaughter that could not have been as well served, or even better served, by the creation of a perfect animal at once. A process is only of value because of the end reached, and if it were possible to reach that end without the intermediate stages I do not know that anyone would have any objection to offer. No one pretends that suffering is good in itself; at best it can only be said that it is good because it leads to the development of a more perfect being, and if the more perfect being could be produced without the suffering no one can deny that it would be infinitely preferable to the present method.

Moreover, the plea that God could not bring about the existence of a perfect animal save through the slow and painful operation of natural laws, is glaringly absurd. It is simply saying that, while he was unable to produce a desired result himself, he was able to endow natural forces with a power which he himself did not possess.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

### Hypatia.

IN the beginning of the fifth century Christianity had fully entered upon its career of temporal conquest and persecution, inaugurating, as it were, a fit prelude to the Dark Ages which soon after followed. The simple Christianity of primitive times was completely lost in the swelling glories of a Church, universal in aim and pretension; the Bishop of Rome had become more powerful than even the Emperor himself, and the prelate of Alexandria was scarcely reckoned much inferior to his metropolitan brother. The Church was now virtually the predominant force—social and political, as well as religious, controlling the Imperial power by artful threats or well-timed service, or by means of the females and eunuchs of the palace. All the splendor of outworn Paganism seemed to be attaching itself to the triumphant new faith, and Christian bishops and priests were beginning to vie with the antique religion in magnificence of ceremony and dress. To further the power of the Church was the engrossing object of priestly ambition, and to this end every contemptible prostitute device was resorted to. The rites of Paganism were imported wholesale into the practice of Christian worship; the adoration of saints and relics took the place of the old worship of a multiplicity of gods; priestly vestments were conformed as strictly as might be to the habiliments of Pagan ceremonial; incense was burnt in the churches; prayers were offered to an innumerable horde of newly-discovered or invented saints; pilgrimages became again fashionable; and lying wonders and pretended miracles abounded to meet the craving demand of the all-credulous multitude. The discovery of long-buried saints and martyrs would alone form a subject of infinite amusement, and the dissemination of precious relics kept pace with it. Amongst other relics the very crosses on which Christ and the two thieves

were crucified were discovered under a temple of Venus, formerly erected on the site of the Holy Sepulchre, and upon the centre of these still remained the inscription written by Pilate. Singular to relate, the Savior's cross displayed a marvellous power of growth or reproduction, for within a few years there were enough specimens of it scattered over Europe to have constructed many hundred crosses. After this we need be surprised at nothing, however absurd. Christianity had become a mere pandering to popular superstition for the securing of power, and already had entered upon that evil and infamous career which stands as one of the foulest blots on the page of history.

Intolerance was the natural accompaniment of ignorance, superstition, and bigotry. To answer the philosophers by argument was tedious and difficult; to silence them by rigorous suppression was pleasant and easy. Ancient learning was therefore decried as magic, evidently proceeding from the Devil, and philosophy was denounced as a vain pursuit which aimed at making men wiser than the God of revelation had intended. In the Holy Scriptures was to be found all knowledge necessary to man's guidance, and all besides was to be stigmatised, and, if possible, extirpated as profitless and unholy. Paganism itself was not at first directly persecuted, but indirectly it certainly was the object of attack, for the persecution of philosophers strengthened the hands of the Church and rendered quite easy the task of dealing with the deluded masses. As an instance of the mode in which philosophy was trampled down, the case of Sopater, a philosopher and friend of Constantine, may be cited. He was accused of binding the winds in an adverse quarter by the influence of magic, so that the corn-ships could not reach Constantinople. In obedience to popular and ecclesiastical clamor, the Emperor was obliged to give orders for his decapitation, to appease the general fury. The works of philosophers who wrote against Christianity, such as Porphyry and Celsus, were refuted by the quick and effective agency of fire. Under Theodosius sacrifices, and even the entering of Pagan temples, were prohibited, the ancient rite of inspecting the sacrificial entrails was made a capital offence, the revenues of many temples were alienated, and some were entirely demolished. All this was the work of the gentle and amiable Christian clergy, who had been enjoined by their great master to unite the harmlessness of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent. The Early Fathers expressed their utter contempt for the philosophy which they could not refute. Eusebius called it a vain and useless labor, diverting the soul from the exercise of better things. Lactantius deemed it "empty and vain," and derided the heretical notion of the globular form of the earth on the ground of the absurdity of trees on the other side of the world hanging with their tops downwards; and St. Augustine asserted the impossibility of inhabitants on the opposite side of the earth, since no such race was recorded by Scripture as the descendants of Adam. Thus the Bible was erected into the position legitimately belonging to reason; it was made the sovereign arbiter of all disputes; and was declared to contain the beginning and the end of sound science and sound philosophy.

The Archbishopric of Alexandria was held by one Theophilus, a bold, unscrupulous man, formerly a monk of Nitria. About the year 390 the great Trinitarian conflict was composed, the Unitarian party having been worsted; and, the quarrel within the Church being settled, there was ample time to deal with the common Pagan enemy; as for opportunities, they were to be created as occasion required. Against the Temple of Serapis the popular fury was directed, the temple being hateful to Theophilus and his monks for two reasons: first, because of the Pantheism which its worship shadowed forth; and, secondly, because dealings with the Devil had been going on for ages within its walls. The Serapion comprised a magnificent library containing 400,000 volumes, and there also were treasured the astronomical and geometrical instruments which had once been assiduously employed by Euclid, Eratosthenes, and others, but which were now regarded by Christian ignorance and bigotry as devices of magic and fortune-telling. It happened that, in digging the foundation for a new church to be built upon the site of an ancient temple of Osiris, obscene symbols of Phallic worship were discovered. These being exhibited for the derision

of the rabble in the market-place, a riot ensued, the Pagans making the Serapion their headquarters. The rescript from the Emperor Theodosius enjoined that the building should forthwith be destroyed, the task being entrusted to the ready and willing hands of Theophilus. First the library was pillaged, its treasures were dispersed or destroyed, and then the image of Serapis himself was shivered to fragments by the blow of a battle-axe; the whole structure being afterwards razed to the ground, and a church built in its precincts. Other Egyptian temples speedily shared the same fate; the cowed monk tyrannised over the philosophy and piety of the old faith, and substituted the worship of his own precious relics for that of Pagan folly. Archbishop Theophilus went to his account, and was succeeded by his nephew St. Cyril, who had been expressly prepared to fill the holy office, and who was in all respects a fit successor of so worthy a man as the departed prelate. Soon after his accession to office, a conflict arose between the Christians and the Jews, the latter for awhile getting the upper hand, but only for awhile. The Christians soon aroused themselves under the inspiration of Cyril, and proceeded to sack the synagogues and pillage the houses of the Jews. The Roman Prefect endeavored to suppress the riot, but in vain. Five hundred monks swarmed in from the desert to assist in the labors of Christian love. The Prefect was himself wounded in the head by a stone thrown by the monk Ammonius, and affairs were assuming an ugly aspect, when the respectable inhabitants interfered and suppressed the disturbance. The monk Ammonius was seized and put to death. Cyril, however, had him buried with unusual honors, and directed that he should be canonised as Saint Thaumasius! This introduction to the imminent approaching tragedy will prepare our readers' minds for it, and obviate the probability of surprise at any barbarities, however atrocious.

Cyril was a fashionable preacher, above all desirous of popularity, and it grieved him sorely that a celebrated Pagan of Alexandria should be able to attract audiences far larger than his own. Amongst the surviving cultivators of philosophy there was one, Hypatia, the daughter of Theon, the mathematician, a young and beautiful woman, in the full flush of ardent life, and, if report speak true, as lovely as a poet's dream. She gently refused all her lovers, preferring to cultivate philosophy untrammelled by domestic ties, and devoted her time and ability to lecturing publicly on various philosophical and geometrical problems. Her lecture-room was crowded daily by audiences more numerous and fashionable than those of Cyril. The Archbishop had not philosophy, but he had power, and he was determined to stop the enchantments of this sorceress, who deluded men from the truth of God as expounded by his faithful servant, St. Cyril.

Thus in the year 414 Greek philosophy and ecclesiastical ambition stand face to face; the former in the person of Hypatia, like a finely-tempered steel sword of reason, the latter in the person of Cyril, like the iron mace of despotic power, ready to shiver the bright steel to pieces by one tremendous swift blow. One day, as Hypatia comes forth to her Academy, she is assaulted by a mob of Cyril's monks, bare-legged, black-cowled fiends, from whom every spark of humanity has been driven by the cursed training of the Church. She is dragged from her chariot, and stripped naked in the public streets; then hauled into an adjacent church, and killed by a blow from the club of Peter the Reader, her cries ringing through the sacred edifice, scream on scream, the cries of helpless innocence in the hands of savage power. But death alone is not sufficient to glut the vengeance of these fiends. They dismember the naked corpse, and finish their infernal crime by scraping the flesh from the bones with oyster shells, and casting the remnants into the fire. So perished this young and beautiful woman, a victim to the intolerance and bigotry of Christian monks; seeming to typify in her own sweet person the witchery and magic of Greece, her art, her poetry, her philosophy. With Hypatia philosophy itself expired in the intellectual metropolis of the world. No abiding place henceforth was to be found for the lovers of wisdom; all lay prostrate at the feet of the Church; and the Dark Ages, swiftly approaching, buried almost every memory of what was once so noble and lovely in the antiquity of thought.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Colonel Ingersoll.

## IN MEMORIAM.

BESIDE the bier of the beloved dead,  
Low at the foot, nay, not at breast or head,  
With faltering hand that fears to do him wrong,  
I lay this shattered shred of worthless song.

In dappled loveliness the garden glows;  
The regal stocks in vivid splendor loom,  
Tall, candent trusses of intensest bloom;  
The scented saltness of the ocean blows  
O'er starry jessamine and orb'd rose.  
The yellow bees melodiously boom  
From honied spray to nectar-laden plume,  
And glittering moths display their tiny snows.  
O radiant day! child of the molten sun!  
Thou imagest that radiant life now done,  
The life from Freedom's very soil upspring;  
The life that formed with Love and Reason one;  
That lived in busy hand, and golden tongue,  
In noble brain, and heart divinely young.

O Ingersoll, all truths that sages know  
Breathed from the strings of thy celestial lyre,  
In softest song or chant of fervent fire,  
That dewed the eye or made the bosom glow.  
Wizard of speech, the lifeless words that flow  
Daily from lip and pen in streams that tire  
The jaded sense, thy magic did inspire  
With ardent life and potent passion. Lo,  
The listening ear thy oratory held  
Like Sirens' song the mariner of old.  
All moods of earth and air and sky and sea  
Spoke in the perfect strain that ceaseless welled,  
Expressive of all lovely things that be,  
From thy rich depths of thought and sympathy.

Thou wast no spectre's thrall; no idol framed  
By barbarous hand or more barbaric mind  
Was in the temple of thy life enshrined;  
No god of thee degrading homage claimed.  
The eager spirit that within thee flamed  
Searched space a god omnipotent to find,  
And found but forceful matter, whirling blind;  
Then home returned, enlightened and untamed,  
To probe the ills of earth, to seek the balm  
Of woe, the root of sin; to sing the psalm  
Of Man's divinity, and point the way  
To nearest regions of serenest calm,  
Where Love and Truth hold undisputed sway,  
And no cursed gods their cringing flatterers slay.

The venom'd reptiles of the marsh and fen  
Before thy potency recoiled and fled  
Back to their slimy depths, and hid the head.  
They spat their spume in vain; but now again  
The festering water moves, the darksome den  
Divides; the monsters leave their loathsome bed  
To mouth their joy that thou art cold and dead,  
And foul the name they feared and hated, when  
Thy strong arm smote the moated solitude  
Of bloody Superstition and her brood,  
Helping to free their tale of captive men.  
Thou didst defy the churl-priest's buffet rude,  
Cowing his sprite with arms beyond his ken—  
The laugh from rancor free, the puissant pen.

O stainless knight, whose lance was ever keen,  
And burnished mail undimmed by idle rust,  
When they who sought thy shame are shameful dust  
The splendor of thy fame shall shine serene.  
Upon the well-remembered lists we lean  
And muse where thou, amid the battle's gust,  
Didst faithfully redeem thy sacred trust,  
Winning fresh laurels of eternal green.  
No adversary laid thy glory low.  
No shaft of slander pierced that soul of snow.  
Victor, unscathed thou hast attained the goal  
And claimed the prize Death's princely hands bestow.  
No more the tide of war shall round thee roll;  
Soft be thy rest, O comrade, Ingersoll.

CHAS. D. STEPHENS.

## Ingersoll.

## AN ACROSTIC.

IN days to come, when each will think his creed,  
Nor fear to speak, though Bogey-books taboo,  
Great Ingersoll, whom grateful thousands read,  
Enshrined will be with all the wise and true.  
Religious God-begotten bigots hate  
Such men, whose words convict, whose lives reprove.  
O well for those whom "sceptics" ante-date!  
Light brighter shines and fairer flowers are seen;  
Life stronger lives, and Death is more serene.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## Acid Drops.

Two more Peculiar People have been sent to prison—this time by Mr. Justice Ridley. Their names are Frederick and Eleanor Norman, husband and wife, the former being a potato salesman of Longridge-road, Barking. They were committed for trial on a charge of manslaughter, and the case was tried at the Old Bailey, where the jury acquitted them, apparently on the ground that there was no proper proof that their infant daughter would not have died if medical assistance had been called in. The next day, however, they were indicted again for having "wilfully neglected" the child in a manner to cause it "unnecessary suffering and injury to its health." After a disagreement and a renewed deliberation, the jury found both prisoners guilty, and the judge sentenced them to six weeks' and one month's imprisonment respectively.

Mr. Justice Ridley was foolish enough to argue with the Peculiar witnesses on Scriptural grounds. In doing this he virtually admitted that the question at issue was one of the correct interpretation of the Bible. It follows, therefore, that the sentence was a punishment inflicted by one Christian (with the aid of his friends) upon another Christian who honestly differed from him. Now this is an impudent act of bigotry, and we boldly brand it as such.

Mr. Justice Ridley got the worst of the arguing, and found at last that "they could not advantageously pursue their inquiry." Why did he begin it, then? Nothing could be more superficial, if it was really honest, than his lordship's reference to the passage in Luke as to the sick, and not the whole, needing a physician. At the best, the words of Jesus in this instance were only an illustration, not a command; besides, the context clearly proves that the malady to be healed was sin, and not bodily disease. The whole matter is carefully dealt with in Mr. Foote's open letter to Mr. Justice Wills, which Freethinkers should do their best to circulate. The thirteen thousand copies printed for gratuitous distribution are all gone, but some of the penny copies still remain and can be obtained from Mr. Forder, at 28 Stonecutter-street.

The jury added to their verdict of guilty a recommendation to mercy "on account of the care which the parents always showed to their children." But this makes utter nonsense of the verdict. Frederick and Eleanor Norman were charged with "wilfully neglecting" their children. The jury find them guilty of wilful negligence, and then ask the judge to deal with them leniently because they treated their children with such care! This absurdity shows the humbug of the whole proceedings. The half-and-half Christians, who prosecute and imprison the real Christians, are afraid or ashamed to say plainly: "These people are fools in going all the length of Christianity in an age like this, and we must restrain them." So they get up the hypocritical pretence that these people neglect their children, which everybody knows is an infamous lie. The police know it, the prosecuting counsel knows it, the jury know it, the judge knows it. They all know it, but they would rather tell a solemn lie than face the real issue. And what is the real issue? Why this: Does the Bible promise, and does God promise—or do they not promise—that the prayer of faith shall save the sick? And do the Peculiar People, in trusting to this promise, act upon the instructions that are definitely laid down in connection with it? That is the real issue. And when judges and juries decline to face it, they virtually admit that England is no longer a Christian country, and that every man, and woman too, who tries to practise Christianity does so at his or her own peril.

The *Daily News* warns the judges against wrangling in court with these Peculiar People, and cynically remarks that they do not always get the best of it. "The proper thing to tell them," our contemporary says, "is that they may do as they like when they are ill themselves, but that they are as much bound to provide their children with medical aid as with nutritious food." But *how* bound? As Christians or as citizens? In harmony with the Bible, or in spite of it? Must not the *Daily News* see, on reflection, that it simply evades the real point at issue between the Peculiar People and their professed fellow Christians?

And what is to be said of our contemporary's suggestion that adults are free to try prayer—as ordered by Jesus Christ—upon themselves, but are not free to try it upon their children? Does the *Daily News* mean that prayer may cure sick adults, but is very unlikely to cure sick children? Or does it mean that prayer is an absurdity, and that, while a Christian is free to commit suicide, he is not free to commit murder? We really wish the great organ of political Non-conformity would explain itself; in other words, we wish it would be honest and straightforward.

William Booth, *alias* General Booth, was summoned by the London County Council for keeping an insanitary lodging-

house. According to the evidence of the inspector, the place was dirty and in every way ill-conditioned, and nearly twice as many persons slept in it nightly as were allowed in the regulated houses. The price charged per night was fourpence, and nothing but the "bed" was given for the money. During the hearing of the case, however, a letter was received from Mr. Bramwell Booth, in which he said that henceforth breakfast or something would be given with the "bed" for the fourpence. In view of this the magistrate decided that the "shelter" was a charitable institution, and the summons was dismissed. That is how William Booth does just what he likes in England.

The dear, good, pious London *Echo* calls this "a splendid victory" for General Booth. "If officious inspectors," it adds, "will only give the Salvation Army a chance, all shelters will soon be made models of cleanliness." So inspectors are "officious" when they complain of the dirtiness of lodging-houses that are conducted under the name of religion and benevolence. The *Echo* does not say how long a "chance" the Salvation Army should be given. Would it suggest twenty years as a minimum? It is several years since William Booth started these "social" agencies, and he might have got them into a state of common decency by this time.

Salvation Army officers in America are claiming the right to marry couples as well as "save" them. "Major" Bell, of Newhaven, Connecticut, applied for a licence to tie up Salvationists, and, on its being refused him, he declared that he would officiate without it. The authorities threaten to arrest him if he does so. Well, it is a very pretty quarrel, and we shouldn't like to spoil it. One exhorter is, in our opinion, as good a splicer as another exhorter. That isn't saying much, but it is enough for the occasion.

Herbert Spencer had better beware. Bramwell Booth is on his track. This gentleman confided to a lady interviewer, representing the *Morning Herald*, that he was not unacquainted with Herbert Spencer's writings. "But," he added severely, "those I study from a very critical standpoint." It is said that the author of the Synthetic Philosophy should encounter this terrible danger at the close of his honored career.

Bramwell Booth told the lady interviewer that novels had no place in his scheme of life. Yet he reads the Bible. Strange!

Religion is not waning, said the great Booth's son and heir; but he admitted that "the attitude of the lower classes, speaking generally, is one of icy indifference and neglect." As for the upper classes, they patronise "civilisation and culture" instead of religion. It is the middle classes that keep religion going. Shopocracy finds it pays. That is the secret.

General Booth is being pressed to extend the Salvation Army to the Soudan. Mr. Charles Neufeld, the Khalifa's rescued prisoner, thinks it would catch on there, and we fancy he is correct, judging from what we saw at Barnum and Bailey's. The Soudanese dervishes there carried on just like Booth's lads and lasses used to in the good old primitive days before the Salvation Army became respectable.

During the Salvation Army show at the Agricultural Hall the famous "General" with the famous nose has been preaching in St. Mary's Hall, which is usually occupied by the Mohawk Minstrels. In one of these sermons, reported in the *Daily News*, Booth said it was asked why God did not destroy the Devil, and he replied that perhaps God couldn't. There were some things that even God could not do. He could not make two and two five. But, begging the great man's pardon, that is not an impossibility, in any rational sense of the word. It is simply nonsense. Two and two make four, we are in the habit of saying; but they don't really make four, they are four; and God couldn't make them five except by adding another. That is a mere matter of arithmetic, and has nothing whatever to do with the possibility or impossibility of destroying the Devil.

William Booth is a remarkably shrewd man of business but he is evidently not a deep thinker, or he wouldn't talk in this ridiculous fashion. A little reflection ought to show him that if God cannot destroy the Devil there are really two Gods instead of one, whatever labels you choose to put upon them. And unless you get behind the scenes it is quite impossible for anyone to be sure which is the good power and which is the bad one. Indeed, they may be both composite, and share both good and evil between them. Altogether it is a splendid muddle, and William Booth had better leave it alone. If he doesn't mind, he will set his people thinking, and that may make them "infidels."

What is non-controversial discussion? According to the *Christian World*, it is allowed after the Free Church Federa-

tion's lectures. But what is it? It seems to us like a round square or a bitter sweet.

Trinity Church, Llandudno, has to be re-consecrated, owing to the suicide of an American within its precincts. We suppose the Holy Ghost flew away terrified, and has to be coaxed back.

Mr. Dan Godfrey, who is touring in America with a band of ex-Guardsmen, played a march at a Sunday evening concert in Boston, and was arrested for it by a police superintendent. Mr. Godfrey pleaded ignorance of the law, and the magistrate discharged him with a caution. Sunday music must be sacred, but it would puzzle anyone to say what is sacred music. The distinction between secular and sacred music is purely arbitrary—like the conduct of the policeman who ran Mr. Dan Godfrey in.

Rev. David Dorrington Boyle, Presbyterian minister of Ballymoney, Antrim, got engaged to a member of his congregation, but afterwards backed out and was sued for breach of promise. During his courtship he wrote much "poetry," of which the following is a sufficient sample:—

I have loved thee, gentle Teeny,  
I have loved thee in the past;  
Though distance do us sever,  
I'll love thee to the last.  
Then remember, dearest Teeny,  
When life's paths most pleasant lie,  
At thy feet doth lie a nature  
Bold and noble, kind and free.

Such verse ought to have made Teeny suspicious. There is too much "lie" in it. However, the lady has obtained a judgment for £250 damages, so she is on the right side at the finish.

Ex-President Hughes, the eminent Wesleyan, complains that Christian audiences "look so melancholy." But he need not be surprised at this. Think what they have to listen to.

What is the matter with the *Clarion*? We looked at the last number expecting to see a good notice of the death of Ingersoll. But there wasn't a word. Instead of it we found a reference to Cromwell's Ironsides who "believed in God." "I would rather," the editor says, "have one William Morris on my side than a million half-hearted, half-wakened working men." William Morris, however, didn't believe in God. What the *Clarion* itself believes in is a little difficult to ascertain—at least, from the last number. We hear its circulation is declining.

Suffolk people, the Earl of Stradbroke says, in olden days were called "Selah," which means "holy"; but in the course of time "Selah" became perverted into "silly," and hence the expression "Silly Suffolk." How naturally. The "holy" of one age is so often the "silly" of the next.

The newspapers report that the latest Trust in America is one for establishing a corner in spooks. Mediums are all to be enlisted under this Trust, and the monopoly will lead to a rise in the price of communications. Those who want messages from the spirit-world cheap should obtain them now, before the Trust gets into full swing.

Morality is a glorious thing, but virtue is sometimes apt to be rabid. Mormon polygamy has been put down by the rest of the United States, and this may be right enough, though it is going to extremes to prosecute men who married several wives before the new law came into force. Mr. Angus Cannon, a prominent Mormon leader, has been arrested at Salt Lake City, and charged with violating the anti-polygamy law. He lives with his first wife, but he has not discarded the others, and his fourth wife, who is a member of the Utah State Senate, gave birth to a child a few weeks ago. It is reported that proceedings will be taken also against Mr. Benjamin Roberts, who has been elected to represent Utah in Congress.

Why do more women than men attend church? This question has been propounded in the *Sunday Companion*, a prize of half a guinea being offered for the best answer. The prize has been divided between a Mr. Crosland and a Miss Barclay. Both say that women have more reverence than men. The lady says the reason is that woman was the last of God's creation, and is a step nearer to him than man. That's very pretty, of course; but might not a sour male say that God made woman the last thing on Saturday, when he was tired with a long, hard week's work—and scamped her? You never know where you will find yourself when you take to proving things from the Bible.

The Women's Christian Union, in Connecticut, favor the re-introduction of the whipping-post. They want to see men lashed who inflict certain wrongs upon women. Such wrongs

are very detestable, but brutal punishments will not mend matters. Ladies will find this out by experience if they persist in this direction. It would be better, though, if they would learn it at less cost by consulting the history of jurisprudence.

Women are naturally prone to be a little hasty in the matter of legislation, especially when it relates to boys and men. Temperance women are hastier than the average, and Christian Temperance women brook no sort of delay. We read that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of New York is working to have the curfew rung at nine o'clock, by which time all boys under sixteen must be indoors. In Bridgport the Christian Temperance women want the curfew limitations to extend to all bachelors under sixty. After that age, apparently, they regard even bachelors as safe.

Men of God are being sadly curtailed in their professional freedom. Here is the Rev. G. B. Brown, vicar of Aston, for instance, who has to pay £50 damages for libelling the village schoolmaster by calling him "a heavy drinker" in a letter to one of the school managers. Parson Brown had libelled this gentleman once before, but the matter was settled by his paying the costs and apologising. This time he has to pay up.

Rev. John Gilbert Surman, rector of Healing, Lincolnshire, has been condemned by a Consistory Court at Lincoln Cathedral to pay £119 10s. with costs for non-residence. It appears that the reverend gentleman was fond of absenting himself as a volunteer, although it is against the laws of the Church for a clergyman to bear arms. Parson Surman should resign his living and enter the Army, where he will find more congenial occupation.

The Very Rev. A. K. H. Boyd, minister of St. Andrew's, Fife, well known as an author, died on March 1, and his personal estate has been valued at £13,253 16s. 10d. Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.

The London University was started by Freethinkers like Grote, and has always been purely secular. It is now to be remodelled, and there is danger of a theological chair being established. We earnestly hope that this nefarious plot against the old character of the London University will be defeated.

"Must be a Churchman." This was the indispensable qualification of a Third Assistant Master wanted in the City of London Freeman's Orphan School—a school charged on the City Estates to the tune of something like five thousand pounds a year. Yet we are told that England is the great home of religious freedom and equality.

Dean Farrar preached to a lot of cyclists the other day at Canterbury. He expressed a hope that cycling would not lead them to neglect Christian duties. Christian duties, of course, mean going to church and keeping up the business in which Dean Farrar earns, or at least receives, a splendid income.

The Chief Constable of Kent, being pious and a Sabbatarian, has been prosecuting tradesmen at Sheerness under the great and glorious Act of his most Christian Majesty, Charles the Second. Two newsagents, two greengrocers, and a barber were brought by him before the beak. But the magistrate, being a man of common sense, pool-pooled these prosecutions, and only fined the defendants sixpence, without costs. Henceforth the Chief Constable should economise the ratepayers' money by collecting the fines—if he can get them—instead of issuing summonses.

Judge Emden, in the Lambeth County Court, was recently startled by a medical man requesting to take the oath by "kissing the book." Of course the judge told him to please himself. All the same, it was really extraordinary on the part of a doctor. "I have myself," Judge Emden said, "seen persons suffering from diseases I need not mention, and which had been contracted by kissing the book while oath-taking." But perhaps that doctor felt he couldn't be sure of telling the truth unless he ran the risk of catching syphilis.

Edward Bell, the cold-blooded Spalding murderer, expressed no contrition for his crime. But in a letter written to the schoolmaster at his native place he said: "I keep looking to God and asking his forgiveness, and I quite believe I shall go to heaven." We suppose this is one of the triumphs of religion.

A terrible band of brigands has just been extirpated in Sardinia. According to the *Daily News* report, they had been holding a special religious service before the troops came upon them. An open prayer-book was found in their hut, and the two leaders, Elias and Pau, had sacred charms under their clothes, including a priest's stole, which is thought

to be an excellent preservative against bullets. Elias was a most cruel and bloody villain, but his piety was exemplary.

Lily Forsyth, a widow, the daughter of a Scotch minister, has been sentenced at Chester to eighteen months' imprisonment for the manslaughter of Ernest George Harrison, aged six, her adopted child. The unfortunate boy was subjected to a long and persistent course of cruelty up to the time of his death.

"Providence" must have winked while the Roman Catholic reformatory ship *Clarence* was being burnt in the Mersey.

John McNeill, the revivalist, is determined to follow Jesus, and, if possible, to get in front of him. Jesus preached a Sermon on the Mount, and John McNeill resolved to do the same, so he went up to the top of Ben Nevis and preached there to forty fools who climbed up to hear him. The temperature was 125 degrees. But what is that to John McNeill? He'll tell you it's hotter in hell.

A representative of the *Westminster Gazette* (July 27) described an hysterical scene he witnessed at the Agricultural Hall. A Salvationist with an accordion headed fourteen other Salvationists who walked round in a circle clapping their hands. Presently they started a revival meeting, and people right and left were carried away with emotion. A girl came up to the *Westminster* representative and told him to listen then and there to God's voice, or he would go to hell. She reminded him of his probable fate more than once, but he remained unmoved. Perhaps he knew, as a pressman, that he had a booked seat in Hades. "I took my leave," he said, "of this curious gathering of commonplace people, stirred by no great oratory, by no fine music, by nothing very obvious, into a paroxysm of emotion." He had beheld, whether he knew it or not, a sample of real primitive Christianity.

The Wesleyan Conference had to consider a resolution moved by Revivalist Champness, that "this conference is of opinion that no Christian man should manufacture or sell intoxicating liquor." Considering that Jesus Christ manufactured intoxicating liquor, this was a pretty impudent resolution. That, however, was not the consideration which prompted the Conference to kick the resolution out. Wesleyans are no more able than other Christian bodies to do without the financial and other support of men engaged in the liquor traffic. Accordingly an amendment was moved by Dr. Stephenson, to the effect that, while temperance was a good thing, and its ultimate triumph to be desired as soon as possible, the Conference declined to "pronounce an abstract and indiscriminate judgment upon the action of individual Christians." This was seconded by the Rev. Charles Garret. The discussion was cut short by the closure, and Revivalist Champness's resolution was lost, the amendment being carried by a large majority. It is said that the resolution, if carried, would have led to a serious split in the Wesleyan camp.

The *Home Magazine*, one of the Newnes publications, is evidently edited and published for the lowest class of credulous Christians. A recent number contains a story of "a well-known divine," who is of course left nameless, and "a fellow-passenger of sceptical proclivities," who is left nameless too. The sceptic affected to know a great deal about the Bible, and the divine asked his opinion of the book of Jehochim. The sceptic said it was a very good book, but full of historical inaccuracies; whereupon the divine told him that there was no such book in the Bible, and the sceptic collapsed. Such is the silliness which the common-garden Christian is expected to believe and relish.

A good story is told of one of the bishops. He was asked how, when he preached at Court, he managed to address so exalted a personage as the Queen, and yet maintain his composure. "I preach to the servant girls," said the Bishop. Eureka! At last we have it! Judging from some of their effusions, the principal use left for the bishops seems to be to preach to servant girls.

The last French battleship that was launched was blessed by an Archbishop. This shows the humbug of that priest's Christianity, but it will not be of much advantage to the battleship. Admiral Cervera took a consecrated flag with him from Cadiz when he sailed for Santiago. It was worked by pious ladies and blessed by holy priests. Nevertheless, it was struck in the first engagement, and fell into the hands of the "infidel" Yankees.

Under the heading of "A Dangerous Proposal Defeated," the *Methodist Times* "rejoices" to record that the Parks Committee of the London County Council has rejected a motion in favor of opening the gymnasiums on Sunday. Our pious contemporary does not state wherein the danger consisted. But we can easily guess it. Gymnasiums might compete too successfully with Sunday-schools.

## The New Company.

THIS is not the best time of the year for projects and appeals. Many people are holidaying, many others are preparing for it, and the oppressive heat is rather demoralising. In the circumstances, perhaps, I ought not to complain of the response I have received on this occasion. Independent of my own thousand shares there are four thousand required, and of these more than two thousand are already promised. Probably some of the capital will have to be raised during the winter. Still, there are a great number of Freethinkers who might give themselves the trouble of informing me what assistance they will render. Their communications will be some guide to me, and also an encouragement. And a task like mine calls for a little of their sympathy.

I have no doubt whatever that the project will "go through," and my solicitor is preparing the Memorandum and Articles of Association for this new Company, which is to acquire the *Freethinker* and the publishing business connected with it, and carry on both, under my personal management, with the vigor and enterprise that are impossible without resources.

When the Company is duly registered, some time this month, all who have favored me with their promises will receive a prospectus and be asked to make legal application for their shares. The prospectus will also be published in the *Freethinker*, so that the whole party may know the exact basis upon which they are requested to give their support. By that time I ought to be in possession of further promises to the extent of (say) £500.

I have written thousands of letters on no business of mine, and have never even charged the National Secular Society, or anybody else, the cost of postage. I do not think, therefore, that I am asking too much in desiring the friends of the Freethought movement to write to me on a matter of my own, which is also *their* matter, if they only saw it in its true light.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Previously acknowledged:—

Mr. George Anderson, 500; A London Friend, 500; Mr. Horace S. Seal, 200; Mr. Fr. Essemann, 100; A Scotch Friend, 50; Mr. S. Hartmann, 30; Messrs. John and James McGlashan, 20; Mr. Richard Johnson, 20; Mr. C. Girtanner, 20; Mr. T. E. Green, 10; Mr. George Dixon, 10; Mr. C. Daviss, 10; A Gateshead Friend, 10; Dr. T. R. Allinson, 10; Mr. G. J. Warren, 5; Mr. Joseph Barry, 5; Mr. Jas. Partridge, 5; Mr. A. L. Brame, 5; Mr. S. M. Peacock, 5; Mr. W. H. Spivey, 5; Mr. M. Christopher, 2; Shares to Mr. G. W. Foote (say) 1,000; Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, 25; Mr. W. Hardaker, 20; Mr. Joseph Guy, 15; Mr. B. L. Coleman, 10; Mr. L. Gjemma, 10; Mr. William Bailey, 10; Mr. Peter Gorrie, 10; Mr. R. A. Strange, 10; Mr. G. Langridge, 10; Mr. Richard Green, 5; Mr. A. B., 5; Mr. G. E. Lupton, 5; Mr. J. D. Leggett, 5; Mr. J. H., 5; Mr. T. Ollerenshaw, 3; Dragon, 2; Miss E. Vance, 2; Mr. L. Leggett, 2; Mr. R. Alger, 2; Mr. G. Freeman, 2; Mr. T. A. Spivey, 2; Mr. C. Shepherd, 1; Mr. Harold Elliot, 1; Mr. A. G. Lye, 2; Mr. John Sumner, 1; Mr. John Roberts, 3; Mr. J. Maling, 5; Mrs. Mary Ann Button, 5; Mr. David Mitchell, 5; Mr. Jesse Oliver Bates, 10; Mr. James Fulton, 10; Mr. H. A. Cumber, 5; Mr. C. E. Brammer, 5; Mrs. Martha Dye, 5; Mr. G. H., 1; Mr. E. G. H., 1; Mr. Martin Weatherburn, 5; Mr. James Neate, 2; Mr. Neate, 2; Mr. George Taylor, 2; Mr. H. Poyser, 2; Mr. John Waller, 5; Mr. J. Bullock, 2; Mr. A. F. Bullock, 2; Dr. R. T. Nichols, 10; Mr. J. Keast, 1; Mr. R. Dowling, 2; Mr. J. G. Thompson, 2; Mr. Albert Smart, 5; Mr. Richard Carroll, 10; Mr. J. M. Day, 1; Mr. W. N. Sweetman, 2; Mrs. D. P. Sweetland, 2; Mr. T. H. Seymour, 10; Mr. C. N. Hayes, 2; Mr. H. Barratt, 5; Mrs. Charlotte S. Giffin, 4; Mr. F. W. Donaldson, 5; Mr. R. Axelly, 2; Mr. F. J. Gould, 1; Mr. J. F. Hampson, 5; Mr. H. Garthwaite, 1; Mr. W. Garthwaite, 1; Mr. C. E. Hall, 5; Mr. George L. Alward, 5; Mr. H. B. Dodds, 2; Mr. T. Hill, 2; Mr. J. G. Dobson, 2; Mr. G. W. Holloway, 4; Mr. Robert Jacob, 10; Mr. A. Brown, 1; Mr. W. M. Constant, 2; Mr. G. Parr, 2; Mr. James Davie, 10. Total, 2,879.

### This week's acknowledgments:—

Mr. J. W. Dawson, 2; Mr. Peter Dawson, 2; M. A. Lewis, 2; Mr. David Watt, 1; M. H. J., 5; Mr. Luke Vickers, 1; Mr. J. Fish, 1; Mr. S. Holmes, 2; Mr. J. W. Griffiths, 1; Mr. J. T. Embleton, 2; Secular Society, Limited, 20; Mr. George Ennson, 5; Mr. J. C. Pickett, 2; Mr. Jas. Baker, 1; Mr. J. M. McInnes, 2; Mr. Hugh Irving, 10; Mr. E. Wilson, 5; Mr. John Proctor, 10; Mr. J. Slyfield, 1; Mrs. Mensher, 1; Mr. E. C. Cooke, 20; Mr. R. Robinson, 2; Mr. J. Seddon, 1; Mr. Frederick Ryan, 4; Mr. R. F. Mack, 3; Mr. William Barks, 2; Mr. Arthur Button, 5; Mr. J. Garven, 1; Mr. C. Cohen, 2; Mr. C. Pegg, 5; Mrs. M. E. Pegg, 5; Mr. A. E. Elderkin, 1. Total this week, 132.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 3, Athenæum Hall, London; 10, South Shields.

## To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 3, New Brompton; 10 and 17, Athenæum, 73 Tottenham Court-road.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

R. DOWDING.—Sorry we cannot answer your question.

S. HOLMES takes two shares in the new Company, and is sorry that present financial considerations prevent his taking at least ten.

J. FISH.—One share may be much for one man, and twenty little for another. We understand and appreciate.

DAVID WATT (Paisley) hopes the rank and file of the party will respond to our appeal. He thinks the new Company "a splendid move."

J. W. DAWSON.—Thanks for your support and good wishes.

JAMES NEATE.—Excellent news. Peg away.

H. PERCY WARD.—Thanks for cuttings.

LOUIS ORGAN.—Pleased to see your letter in the *Oxford Morning Echo*. We wish Freethinkers all over the country would try to get carefully written letters inserted in their local newspapers.

STUDENT.—A History of Freethought in England would be useful and interesting. The late J. M. Wheeler contemplated writing such a work.

W. P. BALL.—Once more thanks for your cuttings.

G. W. SALKELD.—Inserted as desired.

G. DIXON writes: "I am happy to see the subscribers coming up fairly well for your new Company. If there is a deficiency, I will endeavor to take a few more shares; but I would rather see them spread over the party. I know several that could take at least one, and others more."

ARTHUR BUTTON, whose wife is already down for five shares in the new Company, now writes that he will take five himself, although he is only a working man. He hopes the Company will be able to deal with the difficulty at present experienced in obtaining the *Freethinker* through newsagents. He says he knows dozens of working men who would take it if they could get it easily.

W. BARKS.—See the list of fresh promises. Ingersoll's death indeed inflicts a grievous disappointment on his English admirers.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—Thanks for the cuttings. Pleased to have your good wishes for the new Company.

A. B. MOSS.—Glad to know you had two capital meetings at Northampton on Sunday, and hope you will have a good time at Ramsgate.

C. PEGG and MRS. PEGG (Manchester Branch) will take five shares each in the new Company.

FREDERICK RYAN.—Pleased to hear that you will take shares in the projected Company. Of course we read your suggestions in a friendly spirit, as you make them. We are convinced, however, that it would be unwise to reduce the price of the *Freethinker* to one penny at present, although it might be wise to do so at some future time, as a move in a large and well-sustained policy of permeating the masses.

T. WILMOT.—Your thanks on behalf of the Camberwell Branch to the speakers at the Demonstrations in Brockwell Park are noted. No doubt Peckham Rye will receive a visit. Glad to hear that Mr. Heaford gave such a good lecture to a good audience in the evening.

H. J. ALWAY.—*Evil and Evolution* is an anonymous book. We have no idea of the author's identity. What you point out must have been a misprint for Minot J. Savage.

MARTHA DYE.—The correction is made. Pleased to have your opinion that our article on Ingersoll was "very beautiful." It was at any rate written with earnest sincerity.

G. B.—Received with thanks.

REGULATOR.—No doubt there are many Freethinkers at Reading, as there are in a lot of other places, but they want organising. That is what we are aiming at. The new Company will render the task much easier.

J. M. McINNES will take as many shares in the new Company as his means will allow, although "with Scotch caution" he only commits himself for the moment to two. There are a good many Freethinkers north of the Tweed, and we wish their "Scotch caution" would prompt or allow them to do as much.

G. W. BLYTHE.—You are no doubt sincere and earnest, but your long letter about the late Colonel Ingersoll and the Spiritualists seems to us a farrago of superstition.

D. P. SWETLAND.—Mr. Foote sent a telegram to Mrs. Ingersoll on hearing of the death of her husband, and wrote to her by the next mail. The National Secular Society's Executive has also passed and forwarded a sympathetic resolution. You were not aware of this when you wrote. Probably you will now recognise that your suggestion is hardly necessary.

S. HOLMAN.—We do not think Ingersoll's portrait is obtainable at present in England. Perhaps we may get some done from the original of the block in last week's *Freethinker*.

H. C. S.—Received and under consideration.

F. WILSON (Liverpool).—We have handed your order to Mr. Forder, to whom such things should be sent direct. Mr. Stocker will not send you the *Freethinker* again. We announced his death a few weeks ago.

C. COHEN writes: "Please put me down for two shares in the new Company. I take them as some slight recognition of the service that will be done to the whole cause of Freethought by putting its literary propaganda on an organised basis."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Durham Advertiser—English Mechanic—Catholic Herald—West Ham Citizen—Leeds Daily News—Exeter Evening News—Public Opinion—Boston Investigator—Yorkshire Evening Post—Torch of Reason—Crescent—Ethical World—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Blue Grass Blade—Truthseeker (Bradford)—People's Newspaper—Hull Punch—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker (New York)—Isle of Man Times—Sydney Bulletin—Free Commune—De Vrije Gedachte.

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

LAST week's *Freethinker* ran out of print, and several orders could not be supplied. But of course there will be some returns, as usual, and any reader who failed to get his *Freethinker* last week can obtain it this week by ordering it afresh. We may add, for the sake of those who are perhaps ignorant of the fact, that our last issue contained a large portrait of Colonel Ingersoll, with a brief biography, and special tributes by Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts.

The fifth of the Freethought Demonstrations took place on Sunday afternoon in Brockwell Park. Mr. Wilson's brake served as the platform for the speakers, and the audience had the advantage of the shade cast by some tall trees. This relief was very welcome, for the sun was blazing in a cloudless sky. Mr. Heaford acted as chairman and delivered a vigorous introductory speech. He was followed by Mr. Cohen, who was well received and heartily applauded. Mr. Foote wound up the meeting with a lengthy address, which was much appreciated and greatly cheered. The crowd grew larger and larger while he was speaking, until at last it became a really splendid gathering; while the opposition Christian platform was almost completely deserted. The speakers at that opposition meeting did little else but talk about "Foote," and when "Foote" got up the people rushed off to hear him instead of listening any longer to his libellers.

Mr. Foote will be absent from London the next two Sundays; consequently there will be a break in these Demonstrations. The sixth will take place, however, on August 20, and full particulars will be published in due course.

The Athenæum Hall will be reopened on Sunday evening, September 3, when Mr. Foote will occupy the platform. Freethinkers in London will please make a note of this.

Mr. Charles Watts's friends will be glad to hear that he has entirely recovered from his recent illness, and will shortly resume his platform work. He commences lecturing on Sunday, September 3, at New Brompton. The following two Sundays he will occupy the platform at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham-court-road, London. Branches desiring his services between now and Christmas should communicate with him at once at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W.

London Freethinkers will remember the excursion to Littlehampton on Sunday, August 27, particulars of which will be found in our advertisement pages. A special train is chartered for the occasion, and there ought to be a good big family party of Secularists. Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, and Forder will be included, and probably other well-known

Freethinkers. The tickets are cheap enough to be within the reach of nearly all but paupers.

The *Hull Punch* gives a portrait of Captain Monro, who succeeded the late Mr. Billany as president of the local N.S.S. Branch. Captain Monro is a "good fellow," and we regret that he is not now an active worker for Secularism.

Mr. Cohen holds a special meeting in Victoria Park this morning (August 6). The local Freethinkers should give it publicity and try to secure a large attendance.

The Porth Branch has its first excursion to-day (August 6), leaving Torrypandy at 6 a.m. for Southerdown. They are getting up early, evidently, for a long day, and we wish them a happy one.

The East London Branch's excursion takes place to-day (August 6). There are tickets still left, which can be obtained from Mr. Haines, 212 Mile End-road, from Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, or at the open-air meetings. The price is 3s. 6d. Dinner and tea extra, but optional, at 1s. and 9d.

The Bethnal Green Branch is making good headway. Mr. Cohen had a fine meeting on Sunday evening in Victoria Park. Freethinkers who are unable for various reasons to take part openly in the work of the Branch came up and complimented it on its energy and successes.

The Bradford *Truthseeker* for August contains a portrait of Mr. Foote and an accompanying "sketch" from the pen of Mr. Charles Watts.

Our esteemed contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*, publishes a weekly (but never weakly) cartoon by Mr. Watson Heston. The cartoon in the last number to hand, dated July 22, is entitled "Twin Curses," and is headed by a quotation from G. W. Foote—"Religion has always gone hand-in-hand with War." Mr. Heston has drawn them as female figures; Religion dressed as a nun, and holding up a cross with her disengaged hand; and War, helmeted, and brandishing a naked sword; while the ruins of battle are scattered around.

Mr. George Anderson has purchased a large quantity of Mr. Foote's pamphlets, which are placed in Miss Vance's hands for distribution at the Sunday Freethought Demonstrations. Some of them, perhaps, will be available for other open-air meetings. Branch secretaries who desire to have a few for that purpose must communicate promptly with Miss Vance.

At the last Board meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, the Directors resolved to apply in due course for twenty shares in the Company projected to acquire and carry on the *Freethinker* and the publishing business connected with it. Mr. Cohen, Mr. Hartmann, and others, hoped the time would come when the Secular Society would be able to acquire the paper and the publications from the Company.

### Obituary.

We have this week to announce the death of Mr. William Shaw, retired innkeeper, which took place at his residence at Langley Moor, near Durham, on Friday, the 21st ult., the same day which marked the demise of Colonel Ingersoll, a gentleman whom Mr. Shaw ardently admired. Deceased was sixty-eight years of age, and had been a Freethinker ever since he was a young man. He was formerly a proprietor of Brandon Colliery, but was best known as an innkeeper, having occupied the "Victoria Inn," Langley Moor, and the East Howle Hotel, Ferryhill, in succession for a great number of years. Deceased's favorite topic of conversation was the Bible, and no one could show the fallacies and delusions of this book better than Mr. Shaw. He always kept a Bible in the bar of his house, and whenever he got a good audience he would indulge them with his views. He proved beyond doubt that the Scriptures were a delusion and a snare, whether viewed in the light of science or by the eyes of common sense. Nothing suited him better than to have an argument with an orthodox Christian on the subject matter contained in the so-called Holy Writ, and Mr. Shaw invariably came off best in these wordy struggles. His knowledge of the Bible was very great, and he could quote passage and verse with the facility of a bishop. These self-same Christians, however, behaved very badly to Mr. Shaw. After falsifying all their statements as to the Infidel death-bed repentance and so forth, they took exception to the simple lines printed on the funeral card—

"His end was peace,  
Fearing no hereafter"—

and many of them abstained from attending his funeral for this reason. They had boycotted him during life, and nursed their malice even after death. Mr. Shaw leaves a widow, to whom he was most devotedly attached.—G. W. SALKELD.

### True Reformers of Mankind.

It is desirable that it should be clearly understood what is meant by the term "True Reformers of the World." Many persons who have claimed this designation had no legitimate right to it, inasmuch as they ignored the principal elements of all progress. True reform consists, individually, in elevating personal character, in freeing the mind from past errors, and in cultivating the human intellect to its fullest extent. Nationally, reform implies the practical observance of justice, the continual striving to secure the political and social rights of all members of the community, and the guarantee of the exercise of personal liberty and mental freedom. Many so-called reformers in the past have unheeded these factors of advancement, and through expounding erroneous and impracticable theories have done much to destroy self-reliance and retard human progress.

We submit that men who held the narrow and false views of life that obtained when the Church was supreme, and who, by the most cruel acts, forced those views upon others, could not correctly be regarded as the true reformers of the world. The men who have really benefited society have been those who, irrespective of theology, have devoted their time and abilities to the discovery of the facts of nature, to the explanation of those natural laws upon the obedience to which the health and, consequently, the happiness of the community depend, to the inculcation of those moral sanctions which are necessary to personal integrity and to social order, to the maintenance of mental freedom, which is the birthright of the whole human family, to the acquirement of political rights, the possession of which is essential to all just government, and, finally, to the attainment of a sound, practical, secular system of education, which is necessary to the permanent progress and prosperity of a nation.

With an audacity, born of theological assumption, the Church has claimed the reformers of the past as belonging to Christianity, and its exponents frequently ask us what unbelievers have done for the world. Those who put this question seem to overlook two important facts. In the first place, it does not follow, because eminent men and women have allowed themselves to be termed Christians, that they have permitted the Christian faith to influence their actions. The great cry, even within the Churches, to-day is that Christ's teachings are quite ignored. Who will be foolish enough to attempt to do what he commanded, or to try to emulate what he did? Not our philosophers, for they are too wise; not our scientists, for they are too practical; not our men of business, for they are too shrewd, and they love the world, and the things of the world, too much. It may be possible to find sometimes a fanatic or a half imbecile who boasts of following Jesus, but the real reformers carry on their work without troubling either Christ or his teachings. Besides, when the Church was paramount and unopposed, reformers were few and far between. It was during that period that philosophical thinkers and independent truthseekers were objects of suspicion to those in authority; and when a spark of Freethought appeared ecclesiasticism sent forth its malediction, and the whole power of the Church was put forth to quench it. For over fifteen centuries the Christian superstition held humanity, as it were, by the throat, so that it dare not utter a word against the then prevailing theological notions. Is it any wonder, then, that unbelieving reformers were comparatively unknown?

In the second place, we know that the elements of human advancement are not to be found in the authorised teachings of the Church; therefore the world's reformers could not have derived their inspiration to effect reform from any association with that institution. What Christians have to do when they claim great men as belonging to their faith is to show that such men, in their private and public capacity, carry out the teachings of the New Testament. Of course, remembering the persecuting spirit of the Church, it is in many cases exceedingly difficult to ascertain the exact attitude which some of the eminent reformers of the past assumed towards the Christian religion. It has long been thought that the possession of great genius was quite compatible with an evasive

manner concerning views upon religious questions. This avoidance of outspokenness was deemed necessary, because a frank avowal of disbelief in Christianity would in all probability have entailed cruel persecutions and severe penalties.

The same evil obtains to-day to a large extent. Although many of the scientific, political, and educational reformers of the present time will not allow theological teachings to impede their work, still they are compelled in many instances to refrain from proclaiming their disbelief in the Christian faith, knowing that if they avowed their opinions their professional ruin would be the result. It has ever been so since the inception of the Christian religion. And this is one of the most objectionable features in the Christian propaganda. Its orthodox adherents foster a narrow and exclusive faith. Think as they do, and in their estimation you are all right; differ from them, and in their opinion you are all wrong. This is not the attitude of the true reformer, but rather the retarding policy of a bigoted theology.

It is a striking fact in connection with the history of reform that its most prominent promoters have been men who either had no practical associations with Christianity, or who openly opposed its claims. Of this John Stuart Mill, Buckle, Dr. Andrew White, and Lecky give ample testimony. The evidence these writers produce has never been refuted by the Christian Evidence Society, or by any other Christian association. It affords us materials for congratulation to know that modern reformers are actuated more by a desire to enhance the secular welfare of the people than to pander to the prejudices of the Churches. It is fortunate for us that in all ages of the world men have been found who were able and willing to manifest the courage of their opinions, and to defy the malice of the priests. The names of Lucretius, Bruno, Vanini, Goethe, Descartes, Spinoza, Humboldt, Kant, Volney, Robert Owen, David Hume, Lyell, Carlile, Watson, Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, and others, recall to our mind a muster roll of real reformers who labored apart from Christianity in vindication of the principles of personal right and mental freedom. These men were among the true reformers of the world, and to their efforts are we indebted for a large share of that advancement which adorns the nineteenth century. Most of those men are dead, but their work still remains as a monument of service to a neglected humanity.

It should never be forgotten that these Freethought reformers emphasized the fact that disbelief in traditional faith has generally been succeeded by progressive results. Martin Luther disbelieved in the mysteries and nummeries of Roman Catholicism, and what is called the Protestant Reformation followed; Copernicus and Galileo disbelieved in the Bible cosmogony, with its theory of the heavens, and this scepticism gave birth to correct views upon the great science of astronomy; and modern geologists reject the Bible story of Creation, and the consequence is, more faith in the records of nature than in the absurdities of the Christian Bible. In philosophy the same thing has occurred over and over again, as also in the herald of change and of improvement, while its enemy has always been that superstitious conservatism which eschews all advancement, frowns down every new discovery, taboos all change, and keeps its anchor firmly fixed in the errors of the past. With such persons mildew is more sacred than sunshine, and decay preferable to the opening violet shedding its fragrance in the morning air.

CHARLES WATTS.

There needs no other charm, nor conjurer,  
To raise infernal spirits up, but fear;  
That makes men pull their horns in, like a snail,  
That's both a prisoner to itself, and jail;  
Draws more fantastic shapes, than in the grains  
Of knotted wood, in some men's crazy brains;  
When all the cocks, they think they see, and bulls  
Are only in the inside of their skulls.

—Samuel Butler.

It is a foolish taunt against the Infidel that he is fain not to believe in God because of his own wickedness; for what proof more cogent can a man have that he was not made by an all-good God than the fact that he himself is very bad?—James Thomson (B.V.).

## The Alleged Conquest of Canaan.

(Concluded from page 276.)

THE Israelites, as we have seen, either belonged to the original inhabitants of Canaan, or they settled in that country some centuries later than the dates mentioned in the Hebrew historical books. In either case there was no conquest of the land like that described in the book of Joshua, though, as time went on, some of the tribes, when become stronger, succeeded in wresting from their Canaanitish neighbors small portions of territory. An example of this kind of conquest is given in the eighteenth chapter of Judges:—

“In those days there was no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day an inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel..... and they came unto Laish, unto a people quiet and secure, and smote them with the edge of the sword..... And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon.....And they built the city, and dwelt therein. And they called the name of the city Dan.”

This band of dastardly cut-throats are said to have come from Zorah and Eshtaol (Judges xviii. 11), which in Joshua xv. 33 are described as cities in the lowlands within the territory of Judah; but since the Canaanites occupied all the plains and valleys in this province, it appears probable that the men who left these two cities were old inhabitants of the land. In any case, the Danites had not received the territory which is stated to have been allotted to them in the book of Joshua. The story of the division of the land of Canaan among the Hebrew tribes by a mythical leader, Joshua, is, like that of its conquest, a Jewish fabrication. The two alleged events must stand or fall together.

As has been stated, some of the tribes *did* succeed in acquiring fresh territory, but this was only effected by small accretions in the course of several centuries. We have an example of this extension in the evolution of the tribe of Judah, which was unknown to the composer of the Song of Deborah. From Judges i. 19 we learn that that tribe originally possessed but some of the mountainous districts of Judea, the Canaanites occupying all the fertile lowlands, as well as the city of Jerusalem, a stronghold which remained in their hands until after the time of David. Later on we find Judah, with a considerable increase of territory, developed into a kingdom, having Jerusalem for its capital, and fully able to hold its own amongst the other kingdoms in the land.

The history in the book of Joshua, though based upon some small foundation in fact, is a deliberate fraud as far as the Israelites are concerned. It was the kings of Egypt, not the insignificant Hebrew tribes, who subjugated the country, as therein recorded. Now, whether the Israelites were in the land during the Egyptian suzerainty, or entered it at a very late date, it is in either case simply impossible that no traditions of the invasions of Canaan by the Egyptian monarchs, and of the long wars and terrible conflicts which attended those invasions, should have been handed down to the time of Samuel, Nathan, or Gad, or to that of the first Hebrew historian. There cannot be the smallest doubt upon this point. Such traditions there were, but the dishonest and egotistical Hebrew writers have represented *their own people* as the heroes of these old legends. Instead of recording that several Pharaohs came at various periods with large armies from Egypt, and overran the whole of Canaan, capturing and burning every town that did not submit at their approach, these unscrupulous writers represent *themselves* as coming from Egypt and taking one city after another, until they had conquered thirty-one kings and had exterminated the greater part of the inhabitants. A mythical leader named “Yah, the savior,” is put in the place of the Egyptian kings, and this great general, who is able to arrest the rotation of the earth, portions out the conquered land among their twelve tribes. In this fabulous history it is not surprising to find that the waters of the Jordan divided, standing up on a heap on each side, to allow the tribes to pass through; nor that the walls of a city fell down at the blast of trumpets.

As an example of the transformation of real history into Jewish romance, we may take the great battles of Megiddo and Kadesh—the first gained by Thothmes III.

about 1600 B.C., and the second by Rameses II. about two hundred years later. In the first case, Thothmes entered Palestine with a large army, and, marching northward, found a coalition of Hittites, Phœnicians, and Amorites awaiting him in the valley of Megiddo. A great battle was fought which resulted in a crushing defeat of the confederate kings. Among the spoils taken by the Egyptian monarch were 924 war-chariots, of which 31 were gold-plated and had evidently belonged to local kings or chieftains. The cities captured by the Egyptians in this locality were Megiddo, Taanach, Kishon, Hazor, Chinneroth, and Merom.

In the second case, the great Rameses, with an immense army, came into Canaan, and, marching to the north, encountered a similar coalition of Hittites and their allies near Kadesh. Here, after two days' battle, the Egyptians gained a great victory, and pursued the Confederate princes as far as the River Orontes, where many in their flight were drowned. Among the cities captured were Merom, Kadesh, and Tabor.

These two memorable contests are reproduced in Joshua xi. and Judges iv. ; but, as might be expected, they are somewhat mixed up, though not beyond recognition. In Joshua xi. we are told that "Jabin, king of Hazor," called together "the kings that were on the north, in the hill country, and in the Arabah south of Chinneroth, and in the lowland.....the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite." The armies in this confederacy were "as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.....and they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom to fight with Israel." Here we have a description of the two great coalitions of Hittites and Canaanites that fought with Thothmes and Rameses. The result, according to the Hebrew account, of course we know. The handful of Israelites who, as we have seen from the book of Judges, were forced by the Canaanites to hide themselves in the mountains, had no fear of such an immense multitude of horsemen, chariots, and footmen. They "smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon.....and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining." After this easy victory Joshua took and burnt Hazor, and "utterly destroyed" all its inhabitants.

We come, next, to the second Hebrew fiction in Judges iv. In this account we have a second version of the same two Egyptian victories, though the event recorded in this chapter is represented as occurring two hundred years after that in Joshua xi. According to this version, the Israelites had been oppressed for twenty years by "Jabin, King of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor," who had in his army "nine hundred chariots of iron." This is the king whom we have just noticed; he had been defeated by Joshua two centuries before, and, being in Sheol, he was unable to lead his troops to battle in person, so he sent his General, Sisera, and his resurrected army. The leader of the Israelites was Barak, who assembled 10,000 men of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali at Kadesh. With this slender force the Hebrew general marched southward to Mount Tabor, and met Sisera and his chariots in the plain between Tabor and the River Kishon. In this case, also, we know the result. The Israelites, who were afraid to venture down into the lowlands because the Canaanites there had chariots of iron, upon this occasion had no fear of those dreaded war-chariots. They advanced boldly to the encounter, and "all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left." Thus was Jabin's army a second time destroyed.

The Song of Deborah (Judges v.) is supposed to commemorate this victory; but the song is older than the account of the battle which precedes it, and refers to the same confederation of kings as in Joshua xi. This is seen from verses 19-21:—

"The kings came and fought;  
Then fought the kings of Canaan,  
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo:  
The River Kishon swept them away,  
That ancient river, the River Kishon."

Here, it will be seen, it was "the kings of Canaan," and not the general of one king, who fought; while in

the battle recorded in Judges iv. no king at all was present. Also, many of the Canaanites were drowned in "the River Kishon"; but in the account in Judges iv. it is stated that "all the host.....fell by the edge of the sword." Clearly, then, the song celebrates a great battle fought by a coalition of kings of northern Canaan, as described in Joshua xi. It is also equally clear that the two Biblical accounts were derived from traditions of two memorable contests in the north of Palestine which had been handed down, though with many of their details intermixed, to the times of one of the Jewish sacred writers.

We have now to compare the Egyptian accounts of the two historical conflicts with the later Hebrew narratives. In the first place, there is in both cases an interval of about two hundred years between the two contests. In the next place, the Egyptians fought at Kadesh, in the north of Palestine, and in the valley of Megiddo, some fifty miles farther south; while the Hebrew accounts place the battlefields near the waters of Merom (close to Kadesh) and "in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo"—that is, in the valley of Megiddo. Next, the cities captured by the Egyptians on the two occasions were Hazor, Kadesh, Merom, Chinneroth, Kishon, Megiddo, Taanach, and Tabor; those named by the Hebrew writers in connection with the two engagements are Hazor, Kadesh, Merom, Chinneroth, Megiddo, Taanach, Mount Tabor, and the River Kishon. Next, the Egyptians in one of the battles pursued the fugitives to the River Orontes; the Israelites also "chased them unto Great Zidon," which was in the same direction, though not so far north. Next, many of the Confederates, in fleeing from the Egyptians, were drowned in the Orontes; so, also, in one of the Bible narratives, many of the Canaanites were drowned in the Kishon. Lastly, the Egyptians in one of the battles captured 924 war-chariots; similarly, in one of the Hebrew accounts, the army of the Canaanites contained "nine hundred chariots of iron." Further, if we assume, as is probable, that the thirty-one gold-plated chariots, taken by Thothmes III., belonged to kings of Canaan, then we have the exact number of kings which is represented to have been vanquished by Joshua (chap. xii.).

As already stated, traditional accounts of these two great contests must have survived for many generations. And, since the few small Hebrew tribes could not by any possibility have been victors in the conflicts which they describe, there can be little doubt that they took their narratives from some such source. In the same manner, the Egyptian suzerainty of Palestine, for upwards of four hundred years has been transformed into an oppression in Egypt for the same period, and the god Yah is actually represented as predicting this oppression to a mythical ancestor, Abraham. If the Hittite inscriptions ever come to be deciphered, we shall then, probably, have a full exposure of these miserable Jewish frauds. We shall then, no doubt, learn that Jabin, king of Hazor, was the most powerful of the Canaanitish kings, who combined to resist Thothmes III. or Rameses II., and that the Israelites at that time were but a number of shepherds and herdmen who inhabited some of the mountainous districts of Palestine. The Bible stories of the sojourning in Egypt and of the Exodus have been shown to be a tissue of falsehoods; the narratives in the book of Joshua are but a continuation of those fictions.

That the compilers of the last-named book should have fraudulently ascribed the victories of the Egyptian monarchs to their own ancestors is not, perhaps, very surprising when we take into account the inordinate conceit and the ridiculous egotism of these writers. Here are two samples from the book of Zechariah:—

"In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (viii. 23).

"And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles" (xiv. 16).

The foregoing passages have been perverted into predictions of the conversion of all nations to Christianity. They predict, however, a totally different matter—that

of the conversion of the whole world to Judaism: the going up to Jerusalem, and the keeping the feast of Tabernacles, are decisive upon this point. That neither of these inspired prophecies was ever fulfilled is not, of course, very astonishing. The only matter for surprise is the amazing conceit of the ignorant Jewish writer, who believed his own people to be under the special care and protection of the Creator of the universe, and his own religion of sacrifice and stupid ritual to be immensely superior to that of every other nation—past, present, and to come. This characteristic of the ancient Hebrew writers throws some light upon the fraudulent narratives related of the Israelites in the books of Exodus and Joshua.

ABRACADABRA.

**National Secular Society.**

REPORT of the monthly Executive meeting, held at the Society's offices, on Thursday, July 27; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. C. Watts, E. Bate, C. Cohen, S. Hartmann, G. J. Warren, W. Heaford, J. Neate, A. B. Moss, W. Leat, H. Brown, B. Munton, F. Schaller, R. P. Edwards, T. Wilmot, and E. Sims.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. Cash statement was adopted.

The Secretary reported highly successful demonstrations in Finsbury, Regent's, Hyde, and Victoria Parks, and also the amounts collected. The meeting in Brockwell Park would conclude the arrangements already made.

In view of the absence from town of some of the speakers during August, Mr. Warren moved, and Mr. Heaford seconded, "That further demonstrations be adjourned for the present." Carried. It was finally moved that future arrangements be left in the hands of the President, and the resolution was carried.

Three new members for the Porth Branch were elected, three for West Ham, two for East London, and one for the parent Society.

The Secretary reported that excursion tickets were now on sale, and asked for the support of Branch secretaries and others.

The President then referred to the lamentable death of Colonel Ingersoll, and reported that he had, upon receiving the sad intelligence, at once telegraphed, in the name of the English Secularists, to Mrs. Ingersoll. The meeting warmly endorsed this action, and he then moved, and Mr. Watts seconded, "That this Executive of the National Secular Society of Great Britain deploras the death of Colonel Ingersoll, the great Freethought orator of America, as an irreparable loss to the cause of liberty and humanity, and tenders its deep sympathy to Mrs. Ingersoll and the members of her family in their most sad bereavement." This was supported by Messrs. Cohen, Moss, and others, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Schaller, of the West London Branch, reported the action of the police at the lectures given by his Branch at Kilburn, and asked the President's advice in the matter. The President indicated a course of action for those in charge of future meetings, and promised his support in the event of any prosecution arising, provided his advice was properly carried out.

The meeting then adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

**Book Chat.**

AFTER the grudging tributes of respect to Ingersoll in the daily press, it is pleasing to notice the *Publishers' Circular*, the leading paper devoted to bookselling, referring to the deceased as "one of the most remarkable men of his generation in America. A lawyer, a soldier, a theologian, he was at the same time the most brilliant lecturer known in the United States since the days of Wendell Phillips." And, further: "In private life he was greatly esteemed, and his charities were boundless. As a lawyer he is said to have made an average income of £12,000 a year, and the revenue from his lectures and books must have been large. Yet so liberal were his benefactions that he saved little." The editor of the *Publishers' Circular* seems to us to be a gentleman as well as a Christian—a combination sufficiently rare to be worthy of special note.

The *Illustrated London News* gives, in its last issue (July 29) a fine, although small, portrait of Ingersoll, and, in a short obituary notice, calls him "the distinguished American lecturer on Freethought." It also says that "he was an attractive speaker and a voluminous writer. Many of his lectures attacking Christianity so alarmed the American ministers that they replied to them from the pulpit."

The "Atheist-Shoemaker" scandal conveyed a very strong warning of the perils to truth, to honor, to common sense

itself, at which popularity must be sought and acquired in religious circles. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., is not the only believer in Jesus Christ and Him Crucified who has lost, wholly or in part, the power of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, reality and delusion. The liars for the glory of God, riding their pleasant and profitable hobbies, do nothing but go ahead and leave to Rationalists and opponents to doubt and discriminate. Protestants do this one way, and Papists another; but the nature of the act and the results are very much the same.

\* \* \*

The average Christians are certainly like children in one respect. As soon as one monstrous story is told they insist on hearing another still more monstrous. And the professional fictionists keep up the supply. A book just published by "The Catholic Truth Society," entitled *Protestant Fiction*, by James Britten, illustrates this in a remarkable way. The book deals with lies told by Protestants about Catholics, and makes lively reading. It appears that those estimable people who regard Leo XIII. as Antichrist are not contented with merely testifying against Rome. It is not sufficient that the Protestant champions should argue against the Scarlet Lady, her acts and tenets, and announce her final doom. The Goliath must be attacked with a sling of untruth and the stone of calumny. The result is the multiplication of stories of escaped nuns, renegade monks, and Jesuit intrigue, with spicy details. Mr. Britten has deserved our thanks for the thoroughness of his exposure. We always suspected that the "Atheist Shoemaker" was a symptom of a wide-spread disease. We know now something of its enormous extent.

\* \* \*

The Victorian Era has been the golden age for religious books. The sales of the theological writers rivalled the foremost novelists in popularity. The Rev. J. R. Macduff, Dean Goulburn, Bishop Oxenden, the Rev. Newman Hall, Rev. Dr. Cumming, Rev. Horatius Bonar, Miss Havergal, and C. H. Spurgeon sold their books by thousands—in some cases hundreds of thousands. Not only was there a constant demand for the works of individual authors, but also for such libraries as "The Christian Family Library," "The Biblical Cabinet," "Pickering's Christian Classics," and so on. Devotional literature was once considered indispensable in almost every household. *Nous avons changé tout cela!* During the past few years a great decline has taken place in the production of religious books. The force of Secularism is being felt at last.

\* \* \*

Mark Twain has earned the gratitude of Freethinkers, especially when he laughed the Sunday-school boy out of literature. That whining, canting, early-dying, consumptive, flat-chested, knock-kneed, in-toed creature was the model held up to healthy lads of by-gone years as worthy their imitation. So when Mark grew old enough, he went for that nauseous young pietist. He ran him through the literary mangle, and turned out the corpse washed and ironed into a proper state of flatness and collapse. The last time we saw the creature was in the pages of *Farrar's Eric; or, Little by Little*.

\* \* \*

The *Literary Guide* for August opens with an article by C. T. Gorham on "Is Nature Cruel?" in reply to Mr. J. Crowther Hirst. It is well written, but the average man hardly needs to be convinced of a truism. Joseph McCabe writes on "Impersonal Deities," and F. J. Gould contributes a sympathetic notice of the death of Colonel Ingersoll. There is the usual supply of paragraphs and reviews.

**Profane Jokes.**

A BAPTIST minister, fishing near Cape Cod, catches a strange fish, and asks the skipper: "What manner of fish is this, my good man? It has a curious appearance." "Yaas! Only been 'round here this year." "What do you call it?" "We calls 'em Baptists." "Why so?" "'Cause they spile so quick arter they come out of the water."

Teacher—"Yes, children, the angel of death smote the first-born of each Egyptian family." Tommy—"What did he do when he ran up against twins?"

Mermaid—"Aren't you the whale that swallowed Jonah?"

Whale—"Yes." Mermaid—"Well, why did you let him go?"

Whale—"Oh, it's pretty hard to keep a good man down."—*Judge.*

A minister, some few Sundays ago, astonished his hearers by addressing the Deity, not as "Thou who holdest in thy hands the heart of kings," but as "Thou in whose hands is the king of hearts."

Clergyman (as he gets out of the barber's chair)—"That's an awful dull razor you shaved me with." Barber (one of the clergyman's parishioners)—"I hope it isn't quite as dull as your sermon was yesterday."—*Boston Courier.*

Mrs. Kelly—"So th' magistrate sint yure poor little Timmy t' th' reformatory? Sich a good choild, too." Mrs. Grady—"Shure, an' he wor thot, Mrs. Kelly. Ivirying thot darlint iver shtole he'd bring roight home t' his mother. He wor thot good Oi wor goin' t' make a priesht out av 'im."

## 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.): Closed during July and August.

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

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A lecture.

BROCKWELL PARK (near Herne-hill Gates): 3.15 and 6.30, E. Pack.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones.

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, A lecture.

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, Stanley Jones.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Lectures every week evening at 8. Sunday, at 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "Secularism and Socialism."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove): 7.15, A lecture.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH (Jack Straw's Castle): 3.15, R. P. Edwards, "Bible and Monuments."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton.

KILBURN (corner of Brondesbury-road): 7.15, R. P. Edwards.

MILE END WASTE: 8.30, Excursion by brakes to Stamford Rivers. August 9, at 8, R. P. Edwards.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, C. Cohen.

S. L. E. S. (Peckham Rye): 11.15, A lecture. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 11.15, C. Cohen; 3.15, F. A. Davies; 6.30, C. Cohen.

THE TRIANGLE (Salmon-lane, Limehouse): August 5, at 8, W. J. Ramsey.

WESTMINSTER (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Gospels: Their Credibility."

### COUNTRY.

GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row): 7, Violin Selections by Professors Elliott and Ray; 7.15, J. W. de Caux, J.P., "Dreams."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): The hall will be closed during the months of July and August.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Closed for Summer Season.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 2.30, Members and friends meet corner of Arundel and Norfolk-streets, and will leave at 2.45 in conveyances for Mr. Ewing's Holme Farm, Wharnclyffe Side.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—August 6, m., Victoria Park; a., Demonstration; e., Victoria Park. 13, Failsworth. 15, Limehouse. 16, Mile End. 20, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton. 22, Limehouse. 27, m., Ridley-road; a., Peckham; e., Brockwell Park. 29, Limehouse. 30, Mile End.

R. P. EDWARDS, 52 Bramley-road, Notting-hill.—August 6, m., Hyde Park; a., Hampstead; e., Kilburn.

E. PACK, 10 Henstridge-place, Ordnance-road, St. John's Wood.—August 6, m., Camberwell; a. and e., Brockwell Park. 13, m., Hyde Park; a., Hampstead Heath; e., Kilburn. 20, Battersea Park. 27, Mile End.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—September 3, Northampton.

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