

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Still More Ingersoll Echoes.

WE hope our readers will not think we are overdoing this subject. We loved as well admired Ingersoll, and everything about him is precious to us just now. All of us like to talk about a beloved one after a bereavement. Moreover, from the nature of the case, the details of Ingersoll's death, funeral, etc., come to hand rather slowly and piecemeal on this side of the Atlantic. On another page we reprint from a New York newspaper a full account of the cremation of Ingersoll's body. We need not, therefore, devote any space here to that ceremony; except to say that there is something infinitely pathetic in the reluctance of the Ingersoll family to lose sight of the body of the great, tender, loving man whom for so many years they idolised. You may call it morbid, if you will; and perhaps it is to a certain extent. But who that has human feelings is not somewhat morbid under the dark shadow of the wings of death? And where there was great love there must be great grief, and verbal consolations cannot stop a rushing fountain of tears, and broken hearts will not cease in a moment to bleed, and slowly—sometimes almost so slowly!—does the soothing hand of Time heal the wounds of a mighty affliction.

Some of the American papers attribute the great grief of the Ingersoll family to their lack of the consolations of religion. Well, there are many anodynes, and perhaps the cant of creeds may sometimes serve as well as opium. But the Ingersoll family want no such soothing. They know, and they feel, the full force of their loss. One could almost despise them for listening to the cheap condolences and flattering vaticinations which are so often employed to comfort smaller sorrows than theirs. And what, after all, are the consolations of religion? Ingersoll did not *deny* a future life. He regarded it only as extremely improbable; at the very best merely a guess and a hope. His family are therefore free, as far as his teaching went, to cherish the thought that they will meet him again. "Yes," the Christian says, "but that is not enough; one must have a positive assurance." A positive assurance of what? According to Christianity, there is a heaven and also a hell. Few reach the one, many fall into the other, and unbelievers join the majority. Surely this would be a poor "consolation" to the Ingersoll family. It is far better for them to believe that, at any rate, his noble nature is not the everlasting victim of eternal malice; better to think that he has gone to his infinite rest.

We have already said that perhaps it was well that Ingersoll died before the first approaches of senility. Renan protested in advance against any absurdities that a softened brain might make him do or say. It was the Renan sound in heart and head that he wished the world to listen to, not a Renan who, in decaying slowly, might try to destroy all that he had laboriously built up. Fortunately death came to Renan before he was old and weak enough to play the fool. But if he had lived to a second childhood, and had renounced any of the convictions of his manhood, the Christians would have made the most of his misfortune. They would have paraded his senile idiocies as the revelations of a late wisdom, and the multitude would have said: "Ah, that is what the great Renan says now that he has lived long enough to know the truth." We do not wish to say, for a moment, that Ingersoll ever would have played into the hands of his life-long enemies.

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Nevertheless, there is a certain satisfaction in knowing that he can never do so now. There is also a satisfaction in knowing that he died in the midst of his family, and that he lived his accustomed life right up to the moment when Death touched his heart of gold. No room is left for pious lies and edifying fiction about his end. And this fact, indeed, makes the fanatical Christians a little bitter. They feel robbed, cheated, sold. Why on earth did he not give them a chance? It is almost a reflection on the wisdom of God.

It must be remembered that Ingersoll had lived for months before the end came in the daily presence of death. The heart trouble from which he was suffering was liable to kill him at any moment; and he was quite conscious of this, although he was so well in other respects that all expected him to last longer. But that is often a peculiarity of his fatal malady. And really Ingersoll seems to have been deliberately completing what he had to say to the world. It was after his breakdown at the end of 1896 that he published his splendid lecture on Shakespeare, which is certain to live in English literature; subsequently he published his lecture on the Devil—a theme he had never before treated in print; and his last lecture on *What is Religion?*—so firm, so pronounced, and so summary—reads like an almost consciously final deliverance on the very fundamentals of Theism.

Our Spiritualist contemporary, the *Two Worlds*, rebukes us for objecting to its statement that Ingersoll would soon be communicating with Spiritualists from the world beyond. We remarked that it would be more appropriate, and more like Ingersoll, if he communicated with his own friends and followers, and imparted to them his new-found information. We also remarked that, if he did not communicate with *them*, his communications to the *Two Worlds* party would lie under the very gravest suspicion. In reply to this, our contemporary says: "We are prepared to receive such message, the Freethinkers are not." Well, that depends on what is meant by "prepared." Freethinkers are quite *ready* to listen if Ingersoll has anything to say to them. What they do not want is second-hand messages at so much a yard. They remember that Ingersoll always said, after Thomas Paine, that revelation must be personal, for a man may be sure that God speaks to him, while he can never be sure that God has spoken to another man. And they just apply this principle to the case in hand.

"Mr. Foote," our contemporary says, "by denying the existence of spirit communion, shuts the door on the Colonel, and then asks why he stays outside." We beg our contemporary's pardon, but this is a gross mistake. We do not *deny* the existence of spirit communion. We merely say that we perceive no evidence of it. The door is therefore not shut, but wide open. Still, there is no sign of Ingersoll's entering.

The *Two Worlds* suggests "in all earnestness" that we should "endeavor to obtain some personal knowledge" of what we criticise. Well, that is precisely what we have always been baffled in endeavoring to obtain. A great many years ago, in the early seventies, after our debate on Spiritualism with the late Dr. George Sexton, we came into contact with Mr. James Burns, the editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*, through his reporting the debate in his journal. We suggested



to Mr. Burns that we should "investigate the phenomena" under his guidance. James Burns, however, was a canny Scotchman. He was not to be caught. With considerable unction—at which we were greatly amused—he paid us many flattering compliments on what he was pleased to call the "scientific cast" of our mind, which he thought was rather unsuited to that particular line of research. More recently we declined to discuss Spiritualism with Mr. Mahoney, of Birmingham. We said that the facts should be established first; that not discussion, but investigation, was the primary requisite; and that we were quite prepared to furnish a dozen candid (but keen-sighted) Freethinkers to sit on a committee for that purpose. That offer of ours received no notice. It is still open to the *Two Worlds* party.

Our contemporary is sadly confused over another matter. Over in America the Spiritualists are a more heretical body than they are in England. They hold great camp meetings in the summer, and all sorts of speakers address them. Ingersoll did so on some occasions, and the *Two Worlds* does not see why, if he addressed them "in the body," he should not speak to them "from the spirit-side of life." Our contemporary forgets that Ingersoll, in addressing them, merely delivered a Freethought oration. He had no belief whatever in Spiritualism, and plainly said so. Consequently we hold that our contemporary's observations are very wide of the mark.

Light, another Spiritualist organ, speaks eulogistically of Ingersoll, and wishes him "God speed in his onward course 'beyond the mists.'" How curious it is that the representatives of so many different and conflicting faiths are all cocksure about Ingersoll's post-mortem movements. The truth is that not one of them knows anything on the subject. It is all guesswork, as Ingersoll told them when he was living, and as we repeat now that he is dead.

Ingersoll wrote several poems when he was a young man. He has also left some unpublished prose manuscript. But, in respect to his wishes, these things will not be presented to the public. He printed nothing himself with which he was not perfectly satisfied.

One tribute to Ingersoll is especially memorable. It came from Owen Miller, president of the American Federation of Musicians, and ran as follows:—"Mrs. Ingersoll,—On behalf of 15,000 musicians, comprising the American Federation of Musicians, permit me to extend to you our heartfelt and most sincere sympathy in the irreparable loss of the model husband, father, and friend. In him the musicians not only of this country, but of all countries, have lost one whose noble nature grasped the true beauties of our sublime art, and whose intelligence gave these impressions expression in words of glowing eloquence that will last as long as language lasts." Ingersoll had no technical knowledge of music, but he loved it intensely. His favorite composer was Wagner.

Ingersoll once administered a terrible castigation to Talmage. It was done with a smiling face and a relentless hand. Some of the satire and irony was worthy of Pascal. Perhaps the recollection of it has toned down Talmage's usual style on the occasion of Ingersoll's death. He admits that "as husband and father he endeared himself unspeakably," and says he will "plant no nettles on this new-made grave." Some preachers are certain that Ingersoll is in hell. "Be careful," says Talmage, "how you decide upon the destiny of Robert G. Ingersoll." Then he goes on, in his silly, sensational way, to imagine that the truth of the Gospel may have flashed upon Ingersoll's mind at the very last moment; and we have Talmage's word for it that "it does not take an earnest prayer half a second to reach heaven." Well, the flash must have been a wonderfully rapid one, for Ingersoll's death was instantaneous—so instantaneous, indeed, that it left "frozen" upon his face the smile with which he was telling his wife that he was "better." But, of course, Talmage has to utter this rubbish in order to cover the word of sympathy wrung from him for that stricken

household. He has neither the head nor the heart to say with Ingersoll that God cannot afford to damn an honest man.

Rev. Dr. Brady, of Worcester, Massachusetts, is a more thorough-going bigot than Talmage—which we hardly thought possible. In his sermon on "Ingersoll in Torment" he pictured the great Freethinker in hell. "Poor soul," exclaimed this bilious man of God, "he was not there ten minutes before he was hopping around, crying, I did not think it was like this." Ingersoll lectured on Ghosts, and did not believe in them. "He believes in ghosts now," yelled Dr. Brady, "but it is in the ghosts of lost souls that swarm around him, weeping, wailing, and gnashing their teeth." The reason of this outburst seems largely personal. The preacher had often warned Ingersoll to flee from the wrath to come, but "Pagan Bob" had only laughed at him, and the minatory preacher takes his revenge in this cheerful fashion.

The New York *Sun* hits out vigorously at these clerical haters and slanderers of Ingersoll. It points out that he only carried the arguments of the so-called Higher Criticism to their logical and inevitable conclusion, and added nothing "except the consummate art of his eloquence." With regard to the cry of "blasphemy" the *Sun* says: "Granting that the Bible is human literature simply, Ingersoll was free to treat it as he did, and there was no element of sacrilege or blasphemy in anything he said of it." With regard to the preachers who have "passed sentence of eternal condemnation on the dead orator," the *Sun* ventures to suggest that judgment does not belong to them, but to God. Men should not usurp the divine prerogative. "Let men rather," the *Sun* says, "dwell on the virtues of Robert Ingersoll—his superb courage, his beautiful family life, his justice, his loving kindness. Death silenced in him a voice whose eloquence was sweet as music and a heart filled with humanity."

The mourners who visited the house at Dobbs Ferry, where Ingersoll died, belonged to all classes of society. Rich people came in carriages with liveried footmen, and poor people tramped the long road from the station. One man named John Casson, eighty years of age, was among the trampers. For fifty years he had been an engineer on the Erie Railroad, and "many a kind and helpful word I got from him," said the old pilgrim. He was worn out with his long climb from the station, and the family insisted on his returning in a carriage, and they had some trouble in inducing him to enter.

Here is another instance of how Ingersoll endeared himself to the common people. A friend of the Ingersolls was sitting at the dinner-table in the Cardillac Hotel, Detroit, the day after the great man's death, when he noticed that the negro waiter at his table was weeping. The gentleman inquired the reason. "I have just lost a good friend," replied the waiter. "Colonel Ingersoll has died at his home in New York. He was one of God's men, sir. I met him every time he came to Detroit, and in his presence I never knew whether my skin was black or white. He always treated me like a gentleman."

George Gay Barnard, the sculptor, took a cast of the dead Ingersoll's head and features. "When it was finished," the *New York Journal* says, "the women who had watched knew that the only difference between the strong, white face of their beloved and its image in the sculptor's hands was the quality of the clay." A sketch of this death mask is given in the *Journal*, and we think of reproducing it in the *Freethinker*. It is very striking.

A big new York drapery house advertises in the *World* as a special attraction the whole of Ingersoll's pamphlets at a reduced price—fifteen cents instead of twenty-five cents each. A complete list of them is given over another list of Ladies' Oxford Ties, Silk Shirt Waists, etc. Evidently the manager of that drapery house doesn't think that Ingersoll's "blasphemy" will scare away customers.

Perhaps the most astonishing piece of writing on the

death of Ingersoll appeared in *Brann's Iconoclast*, a journal with Freethought pretensions, published at Chicago. This journal was founded by W. C. Brann, who got shot in a quarrel. It is down on all Protestant sects, but it never loses a chance of praising the Catholic Church. Our colleague, the late J. M. Wheeler, used to think that Brann's paper was really run by the Jesuits. With regard to Ingersoll, it says that he will be remembered as a shatterer of hopes and ideals. "How vain, how futile, how meretricious, how glitteringly false, how little worthy," it says, "appears all that he has thought and said and done when placed beside that noble and steadfast promise, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'" Can it be that the Jesuit forgot his disguise in writing this paragraph?

G. W. FOOTE.

The Evils of Life.

By evil we mean those forces in nature which are productive of misery to the human race. That its existence is a fact no one can reasonably dispute. Evil is generally defined as being of two kinds: there is natural evil, which produces physical suffering, and there is moral evil, which results from ignoring a rule of conduct that is conducive to the rectitude of character. We are not concerned here with the origin of evil; that we leave for theological dreamers and metaphysical speculators. According to the Bible, God admits that he originated this disturbing element in nature—a fact which was not to his credit if he were infinite in power and in wisdom. His action in this matter has been the source of untold suffering, and has imposed upon man the weary, and often painful, task of endeavoring to rectify the unpardonable mistake God made. It is possible that many so-called evils are imaginary, but when this allowance is made the fact remains that there are too many real ones that mar the happiness and well-being of the community. Rousseau distinguished real from imaginary evils by saying that, "except pain of body and remorse of conscience, all our evils are imaginary."

To us it appears manifest that the evils of life can be traced to human causes. Put briefly, the case amounts to this: Given sound health, human happiness is possible; given physical and mental liberty, social comfort can be obtained; but without these two conditions suffering is inevitable. Take, for instance, the relative condition of the rich and poor in modern society. Many of the former enjoy what the latter produce. The few live luxuriously in a state of idleness upon the incessant labor of the masses. The result is a perpetual condition of misery for the poor, while the rich spend their time in what we term artificial happiness. Most toilers have to work too many hours for very low wages; they have to live in wretched homes, with bad and scanty food and indifferent clothing. Consequently they are compelled to endure many privations, which constitute the severest evils of life. It matters not, so far as applying the remedies is concerned, by whom these evils were brought about—they are here; and, in our opinion, many of them by judicious action could be avoided. The remedy is not to be found in anything supernatural, but rather in the readjustment of our social conditions. The blame is not all on the side of the rich; the poor are frequently careless in the arrangement of their limited means, and are not sufficiently frugal in their mode of living; yet, when this fact is admitted, the truth remains that our social order is marred with miseries of a most deplorable nature. We have wealth and luxury at the top, and poverty and misery at the bottom of the structure called society, and both rich and poor increase as the nation extends its possessions.

It is only reasonable to suppose that every member of the human family should have a fair share of the fruits and enjoyment of the earth, but things are not so divided under the "divine government of the universe." Thousands of deserving poor have to sustain a miserable existence upon insufficient nourishment. Men have to labor in mines, seldom seeing the light of the sun; men and women, and even children, have to toil in factories, breathing a vitiated atmosphere for a bare

subsistence—that is, nine-tenths of the people live a life of drudgery. Under such circumstances it is not reasonable to expect freedom from pain and suffering either in mind or body. We need not seek in the theories of theology or in the domain of mystery for the causes of the ills "that flesh is heir to," when those causes surround us in daily life. The devout believers in the religion of Christ will look upon the evils of society as a part of God's plan, and therefore will do but little to remove them, hoping for compensation in some future life. The Secularists, on the contrary, having no faith in a future existence, strive to secure as much immunity as possible from the evils of life by discouraging whatever hinders the acquirement and development of human happiness. Thus we see how superior the teachings of Secularism are to those of Christianity. Secularists consider that it is in the power of mankind to considerably improve the supposed plans of God if they foster and cultivate superior conditions. Believing that there is happiness for all under proper arrangements, Secularism suggests that attention be directed to the re-arranging and reforming of existing materials of all kinds, moral, political, and social. How to do this is the problem before us. Years have been devoted to its solution; hitherto, however, with very scant success. The false teaching has gone forth that men should set their affections on things above, that they should seek first the kingdom of God, and other things would be added thereunto; that they should love not the world, nor the things of this earth; that they should look upon life as of short duration. The result has been that society has been neglected, and mankind have been induced to think too lightly of the duties of life. The materials of progress are lying around us, and our aim should be to learn the science of turning them to utility; virtue and happiness would thereby be increased, and existence ennobled.

The great drawback of the Christian method of dealing with the evils of life is that it tampers with effects, while ignoring their causes. We are glad to see that the editor of the *Church Gazette* recognises this fact. In a leading article in its issue, July 22, we read the following: "Take the case of the rescue of outcasts and the submerged tenth. No one can doubt for a moment that the more such rescue can be accomplished the better. Yet individual effort is not satisfactory, because it achieves no cure. Say that the Church Army, or Dr. Barnardo, succeed in saving some hundreds of interesting outcasts; the question of how they came to be outcasts is still quite untouched.....So lately as July 11 the Bishop of Wakefield wrote to the *Daily News* a letter on questions connected with social reforms and cognate matters, in which he says: 'We have hitherto been too much occupied with pruning back the branches, while we have neglected the root. We have dealt with the symptoms instead of going to the seat of the disease. Earnest social reformers have confined themselves to one aspect of the question, and sometimes pushed that to such an extreme as to alienate the more sober thinking and influential people.'" We thoroughly agree with our religious contemporary in the remarks here made. We consider that "prevention is better than cure," and therefore our aim, as Secularists, should be to do our best to produce such a state of society that, as good Robert Owen said, "it shall be impossible for men to be depraved or poor."

Bearing upon the subject of human evils there are two theories—those of Pessimism and Optimism. The former represents human life as having a surplus of pain over pleasure, and the latter the reverse. The pessimist assures us that the sentiment ascribed to Job as to the shortness of life and its troubles finds an echo in the language of every nation. This view is based upon the supposition that the best thing would have been for us not to have been born at all, and the next best thing is to die as early as possible. We need not say that this is not the Secular idea of existence. Socrates thought that the greatest man amongst us could not point to a happier time than a night of dreamless sleep (Apology xxxii.). Plato remarked that the evils of the world would continue until philosophers became kings, or kings became philosophers. If this be true, the prospect of the cessation of evil is very remote. Bentham described mankind as being under two governors, pain and pleasure. "These," he

held, "govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think." Pope considered that "Man never is, but always to be, blest." If this be so, we are inclined to believe that it is largely man's own fault. Thomas Jefferson, in his *Memoirs*, states his opinion that the world is framed upon the principle of benevolence on the whole, and that there is more pleasure than pain. He says: "I steer my bark with hope in the head, leaving fear astern."

It will be thus seen that the theories as to the evils of life are numerous and varied. What, then, is the practical conclusion which reason and experience justify us in arriving at? Speaking for ourselves, our opinion is that we should not worry as to how evil originated, and that we should regard its alleged supernatural origin as a theological fallacy. We must face the unfortunate fact that evil abounds in our midst, and that it is our duty to endeavor to lessen its miseries as much as possible by studying natural laws, and applying their legitimate operations to the requirements of the human family.

CHARLES WATTS.

The Dying of Death.

"THE Dying of Death" is the curious and, at first sight, startling title under which Mr. Joseph Jacobs, the eminent folk-lorist, informs readers of the *Fortnightly* that the fear of death is becoming gradually weaker with the advance of civilisation. That this is so is beyond question. Those who are able to carry back their memory forty or fifty years will know how filled was the preaching of their earlier years with death, and all that was to happen afterwards. And those who are too young to do this need only pick up a volume of sermons to see what a large proportion of the current theology dealt with the subject. And if we were to go back a still further fifty years, the change is so great that it would seem as though the people then were living in a different universe. Probably fifty per cent of the religious literature of the day dealt with the approach of death, while from childhood people were fed with literary productions calculated to produce chronic melancholia in a Mark Tapley. For a parson to have written a novel of the kind produced by "Ian Maclaren" or Joseph Hocking would have been looked upon as little worse than committing a murder; even the *Sign of the Cross* would have failed to win the approval of the "Christian conscience." "Prepare to meet thy God" was the burden of all preaching, and the necessity of preparing for death was insisted on by the clergy with an energy worthy of an army of life assurance agents.

It is worth noting that this intense fear of death—so far as Europe is concerned—was a characteristic product of the Christian ages. The fear of death played but a small part in the best life of Greece and Rome; and, even with the lower classes, it was only during the decline of Greece and the last days of the Roman Republic that the statement would not be true of them likewise; while there was always an offset in the shape of the educated opinion of both countries. Of Greece Professor Mahaffy, speaking of the Greek sculpture concerning death, says: "They are simple pictures of the grief of parting—of the recollection of pleasant days of love and friendship—of the gloom of the unknown future. But there is no exaggeration.....in the picture."* And, of Rome, a single quotation from the Stoic Epictetus will show the prevailing sentiment, although the writings of the Epicureans would display a still stronger disregard of the "King of Terrors." Likening life to a man setting out on a voyage, he asks: "What is it possible for me to do? This: to choose the captain, the crew, the day, the opportunity. Then a tempest has burst upon us; but what doth it concern me? I have left nothing undone that was mine to do.I do (now) only what I am able—drown without terror and screaming and accusing of God, but knowing that that which has come into being must also perish. For I am no immortal, but a man, a part of the sum of things, as an hour is of the day. Like the hour I must arise, and, like the hour, pass away."

It was the advent of Christianity and its rise to power

* *Survey of Greek Civilisation*, p. 162.

that gave to death the fearsome aspect that it afterwards assumed. Here the uneducated classes found no rectifying force in the persons of their leaders. All the existing pagan beliefs concerning a future life were concentrated, developed, and fresh features added by the centuries of sickly Christian philosophy that followed. Plato had promised a hell of a thousand years' duration; Christianity stretched it to eternity. Plutarch and others had cast discredit upon the popular beliefs concerning a future life; Christianity re-affirmed them with all the extravagant embellishment of a diseased imagination. With the pagans death was simply one of the facts of existence, as normal and as natural as birth; with Christianity death was a penal infliction, not embraced in the original scheme of things, and only appearing as a consequence of human depravity and disobedience. The pagan art of living gave place to the Christian art of dying. Christianity might, indeed, be fitly called the religion of death's glorification; its followers felt that they were actually living in the valley of the shadow of death, and were promised unheard-of terrors when they should have penetrated deeper into the interior.

For hundreds of years—right up to our century in fact—the Christian imagination occupied itself principally with the subject of death. The greatest poem of the Middle Ages deals exclusively with the subject of an after-life. Human ingenuity exhausted all its powers in describing the nature of hell and the torments of the damned; and with death constantly held before the people as the certain entrance to an eternity of existence that might be spent in heaven, but would more probably be spent in hell, one can understand easily enough how the fear of death gained under a Christian rule a strength it had never possessed in pre-Christian time.

And now the fear of death, as Mr. Jacobs says, is moribund. "The Church, in all its sections, is devoting its attention more to this life than any other. Death is regarded no longer as a King of Terrors, but rather as a kindly nurse that puts us to bed. The fear of death is being replaced by the joy of life. The fumes of Hell are sinking low, and even Heaven has but poor attractions for the modern man. Full life here and now is the demand; what may come after is left to take care of itself."

All this is true enough and significant enough as a statement of fact; but why is it so? Mr. Jacobs gives two reasons for the change of sentiment, but neither separately nor collectively do they seem able to cover the whole ground. The first reason is that improved sanitation and hygiene, the cessation of duels, petty wars, and the like, have lengthened the average duration of life and made death a far less familiar sight than it was to our ancestors; and, secondly, town life lessens the insistent dread of death by placing all under the same conditions of existence, and thus crushing individuality. "With this dying out of individuality the belief in immortality tends to fade simultaneously.....The average man feels a crushing sense of insignificance produced by the air of great cities which renders his continued existence less likely to the imagination.....We are realising that the universe can manage to get on without us."

Mr. Jacobs's explanation of the change in sentiment seems to me unsatisfactory for several reasons. First, it is not clear that life was much more uncertain, or death a more every-day occurrence—putting on one side such epidemics as the Black Death—during the Middle Ages than was the case in many other periods that might be selected. At least, the average duration of life was no lower, nor were the deaths from violence more numerous, than among uncivilised races, and probably not much worse off in these respects than Greece and Rome. Yet neither among savages, nor, as I have shown, among the pagans, was there a constant and morbid fear of death and the after-life. Besides, the effect of constant contact with death is not to make people fear it—save in very rare cases—but rather to make them callous concerning it. Those who are constantly face to face with death dread it least; and, as a matter of fact, it was not death, as death, that people dreaded, but the torments which the Church had taught awaited them afterwards. Nor is it easy to see how loss of individuality consequent on town life—admitting its existence—would lessen the dread of death. I do not see that the average man or

woman during the Middle Ages had more individuality than their modern descendants; one would, indeed, be strongly inclined to hazard an opinion to the contrary, although there was present in all cases a tolerably strong fear of a future life. And if one is to use present-day human nature as a guide, it is generally the people that have least individuality about them who stand most in awe of death, and are most influenced by the belief in a future life. One need go no further than the ranks of the Salvation Army to find ample proof of this.

The true cause of our altered sentiments concerning death and after-death would rather seem to be the progressive broadening of the intellectual outlook that has taken place during the past three or four hundred years. It was easy to believe in the Christian heaven while the sky was thought to be a solid dome of but scanty extent; easy to believe in a hell while physical science was quiescent and geology unborn. While the earth was believed to be a small body, the centre of a small universe, and man the chief object of creation, Christian doctrines formed a logical, or at least a plausible, deduction from the existing cosmology. At all events, there was nothing very incongruous between the two sets of ideas. The growth of physical science broke down the harmony of ages, and all for a time was chaos. People found themselves with a new view of the universe utterly at variance with the traditional religious beliefs, and in the re-establishment of an intellectual equilibrium Christianity lost heavily. Beliefs that seemed reasonable enough with the old cosmology became trivial and ridiculous with the new. Both the teachers and teaching of Christianity were discredited; a new critical spirit of investigation was evoked, and this, applied to existing religious beliefs, gradually made it plain that an after-life was a subject upon which all were at liberty to guess, but one upon which no certainty could be reached.

It may appear an ordinary observation that the man who has lived life well need have no fear of death, and yet it is a statement that carries with it a profound significance. For the fear of death gained its chief strength from the inculcated belief that, no matter how good a man might be, salvation was impossible without the addition of a set of beliefs on behalf of which no sound evidence could be offered. In other words, while the value of this life was measured in terms of the next, death was bound to loom large in human thought. The grave was then the entrance-hall to a chamber from which issued the decrees that determined man's eternal welfare, and death the summons to attend. But when the point of view had been completely reversed, when, instead of deciding the value of this life from the standpoint of a hypothetical future existence, this life was taken as an end in itself and all others measured by it, death and after-death ceased to be the determining factors in life; the former became what it was to the educated pagan world—one of the facts of existence to be faced with courage and equanimity—and the latter assumed its true position as a pure speculation grafted upon the psychology of primitive man.

"A free man," says Spinoza, "thinks of death least of all things, and his wisdom is a meditation not of death, but of life." One could hardly say anything more to the point. It is a sickly philosophy, and he is a sickly individual that in the midst of life is concerned only with death. Happily this figure, once so common, becomes more rare as time advances. The world is fast reaching the conclusion that life here may be made both liveable and loveable if human energies are only directed into the proper channels. Life is part of nature, and nature is neither good nor bad. It is to each what his organisation renders him capable of experiencing. To one nurtured upon Christian theology the fear of death may well be ever present and strong. To the man who has learned to look nature fairly in the face, with mind unclouded by prejudice, the thought of death can bring and pleasant, death is but the bidding adieu to an agreeable companion. If it has not, he can still say with perfect serenity of mind:—

Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further.

C. COHEN.

Acid Drops.

HEATHEN Japan seems able to teach Christian England a few things worth knowing—and doing. For instance, the Sanyo Railway devotes to charitable purposes all the money realised by the sale of platform tickets, the amount being distributed every half year amongst Orphan Asylums and other philanthropic institutions. Who ever heard of anything of the kind being done by one of our great railways?

A man called J. McAuley, of Buffalo, New York, has been sentenced to twenty-five days' imprisonment for a very peculiar offence. A young lady passing him in the street felt compelled to look at him; then she lost her self-control and walked side by side with him up and down several of the principal streets. Presently a policeman took hold of her arm, and the spell was broken. The next scene was the arrest of the hypnotic McAuley, who was complained of by other women, and the result is that for a time he has no one to hypnotise but an unimpressionable prison warder.

On the whole, it seems to us that the hypnotic McAuley is rather badly treated. Many women feel compelled to go after a man. Sometimes it's the man's fault, sometimes it's theirs, and sometimes the fault is on both sides. It is a little rough on the man to treat him as a wizard, and the woman as a helpless victim.

The Hull Corporation has taken the lead in prosecuting small Sunday traders, such as the vendors of sweetstuff and tobacco; but it is now doing Sunday trade itself on a colossal scale. It has become the owner of a tramway, and the first Sunday's takings ran into three figures of pounds. This prosperity of ungodliness seems, however, to have frightened the more pious members of the Town Council, who have worked through a resolution denouncing the morning service of tramcars. It is difficult for the ordinary mind to perceive how morning tramcars can be more wicked than afternoon or evening tramcars. It is also difficult to see why the Corporation should carry on Sunday traffic itself and continue persecuting others for doing the same thing on a much smaller scale.

Soul-saving is carried on vigorously, however unsuccessfully, in the Terrett Memorial Hall, Hotwells, Bristol, under the presidency of the patron saint, W. Terrett, Esq., who invites the people to "come in crowds." From the elegant handbill lying before us, on which the Cross and the Prize Ring are in intimate association, we see that the exhorting is chiefly done by two gentlemen called Chaffey Hayman and Ted King—the former a converted prize fighter, and the latter a converted docker. Both of them, perhaps, are a little *passé* for their old occupations, and find it easier and more profitable now to tell "the story of the cross"—as the handbill announces.

Rev. C. M. Sheldon, author of that trashy *What would Jesus Do?* complains that "there is not in existence in the United States a single Christian daily paper." He also complains that Church members give more time to reading the newspapers than to reading the Bible or religious books and papers. No doubt this is bad for Sheldon and his clerical brethren, but it has its compensations for those who are engaged in more useful and honest lines of business.

Ned Wright is now Mr. Ned Wright. He is evangelising in a tent at Hammersmith, and according to the *Christian* an "important change" is noticeable in his meetings. Originally men and women came in about equal numbers, but the tent is now almost entirely filled with men. The reason of this change is unconsciously disclosed a little later on, where we read that "a striking feature of the Mission is the attendance of many drunken men."

Mr. Britten, secretary of the Catholic Truth Society (what a comical title!), wrote to the proprietors of *Harmsworth's Magazine* protesting against the advertisement of the *Protestant Echo*. Harmsworth Brothers replied that the advertisement had been inserted without their knowledge and permission, and would not appear again. This firm is the one that was so easily frightened into dropping the Sunday edition of the *Daily Mail*. What on earth is the use of being a millionaire if you can't call your soul your own whenever a bigot gets up and howls at you?

Men of God have many compensations in this miserable vale of tears. We see it announced in a West of England paper that the Bishop of Exeter is leaving home for five weeks. Lucky man! Many poor Atheists cannot get one week's holiday. Yet they are to have all the worst of it hereafter. Back seats in Hades, not a draughty spot near the door.

The great Methodist demonstration in Hyde Park fell rather flat. Four platforms were provided, but only two were used. It was expected that the Methodists of London would rally in their thousands, but they failed to put in an appearance, and, despite the brilliant weather, the enterprise was a failure.

Mr. Price Hughes stated, in the Wesleyan Conference, that, when he was a young minister, the most influential minister in the Connection described tectotalism as "detestable," and only a short time ago it was absolutely illegal to hold a temperance meeting on Methodist premises. Christianity has turned its coat on this as on so many other questions. Religion usually opposes all reform and advancement, but, when the reform has become inevitable, turns round and claims all the credit.

Sidney Hall, of Hartford, Connecticut, has left some eleven thousand dollars in trust for combating "the unscriptural, unreasonable, and pernicious doctrine of the immortality of the soul," which he declares to be "the greatest of pagan delusions." This gentleman was a Christian and a believer in the full inspiration of the Bible.

What a strange book the Bible is as a revelation from God! You can prove almost anything from it, and disprove almost anything. One man passionately preaches that it supports free will; another man just as passionately preaches that it supports absolute predestination. One man swears that it teaches the immortality of the soul; another man gives eleven thousand dollars to help prove that it does nothing of the kind.

While certain dignitaries of the Church draw extravagant emoluments for very inconsiderable services, a number of the poor clergy are complaining that they have to live on incomes of less than £100 a year. Some of these unfortunates endeavor to eke out a livelihood in rather odd ways. Out of the 33,494 priests of the Church of England, hundreds, we are told, earn incomes by introducing clients to insurance offices. There is nothing very incongruous in this, after all. The clergymen simply double their duties as insurance agents. They induce their flocks to insure their property against fire in this world, and they undertake to insure the souls of their flocks against everlasting fire in the world to come.

Here is an instance of real self-abnegation: A clergyman on the East Coast, feeling that he was living more luxuriously than he ought, has sold his horse, and presented the proceeds to the Church Army. Now then, Archbishop of Canterbury, with your £15,000 a year; and you, of York, with your £10,000 a year; and you, Dr. Creighton, with your £10,000 a year, cannot you spare a little more than you do from your handsome incomes? You need not "sell all and give to the poor," but you might show a little less inclination to stick to the loaves and fishes.

Mr. H. W. Clarke, in the *Daily News*, draws attention to the untrustworthiness of Clerical Directories and Church Year Books. He says that the statistics are all cooked by the incumbents themselves, who want to hide the real amount of their incomes. The case is instanced of the Rev. William Ostle, who is returned as vicar of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, with a net income of £13 a year and a house. This man of God actually receives £400 a year, besides having a paid curate to assist him.

This reminds us of a case that was brought before the House of Commons about sixty years ago. A well-known pluralist returned his net income as £150 a year, although his two livings were worth £1,500 a year. On being asked for an explanation, he said that his wife was delicate and required a carriage and pair, that his sons had a very expensive education, that he had to keep a horse to journey between his two parishes, and that when all his expenses were deducted he had only £150 a year left for himself. In other words, the reverend gentleman confounded his net income with his pocket money.

The Salvation Army contingent, at a certain seaside resort, has a daily beanfeast. It comes out regularly on the sands under the esplanade, like the nigger troupe and other bands of entertainers, and at the same intervals. It beats a drum, blows a cornet, sings poor hymns very poorly, prays a great deal, gives short addresses as stereotyped as the other entertainers' songs and sketches, and always keeps a sharp eye on the collection, although its "show" is incomparably the worst in the town. An occasional study of the people who stop to listen to the drum, the cornet, the prayers, and the exhorting tends to corroborate the opinion of Nietzsche that Christianity is the religion of the unfit. The little gathering—it is never a large one, except on Sunday, when the Salvation Army contingent has the place all to itself—is principally composed of what the inspired writer would call the lame, the blind, the maimed, and the halt. The females especially seem all anæmic. They remind one of Ingersoll's epigram, that there

are some young folk who are too consumptive to be vicious. Those who have no capacity for enjoyment, however innocent, look upon it as something sinful, leading straight to the bottomless pit.

The creditors of Mr. D. T. Colquhoun, the pious Treasurer of the City of Glasgow, will perhaps be wary in future of trusting any man on the strength of his godliness. The trustee announces the liabilities as amounting to £191,479, and the deficiency as no less than £149,698. One creditor at the meeting wanted to know if a Forgeries Committee would be appointed. According to all reports, this pious Colquhoun has been a fearful impostor.

A striking letter written by Dr. Jowett, the famous Master of Balliol, is published in the new Autobiography of Dr. Samuel Davidson, the Biblical scholar who was turned out of his college many years ago for heresy. "Liberal views in theology," said Jowett, writing in 1885, "make greater progress than formerly, but in a sort of subterranean and also negative manner. People do not say much about this publicly, and the change in their opinions is seen more by what they do not say than by what they do.... I never hear anyone preach about eternal punishment, or vicarious atonement, or verbal inspiration, and very few about miracles—even the Bishop of London tells us that the miracles of the Old Testament have no sufficient evidence." Of course Jowett was referring to the spread of liberal views within the Church itself, and not outside.

What do bellicose Christians say to the memorial recently forwarded to Lord Salisbury by the Society of Friends in Great Britain? The memorialists state that they view with the gravest concern the proposed amendment of the long-disused Militia Ballot Act. "The Society of Friends has ever held that war is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ, and believe that his commands are those that claim allegiance above all others." Strange that there should be such a violent difference of opinion as to what really are the teachings of Christ on this momentously important matter. There ought to be a second coming of Christ, if only to afford him an opportunity of telling us what he actually meant.

The *Herald of Peace*, which has Christian proclivities, says: "It is estimated that since the Christian era began over 4,000,000,000 human beings have perished in war." What an admission!

The real conquerors are not the generals, but the thinkers; not the Kitcheners, but the "Erbert Spencers," as the Christian Evidence men call the distinguished philosopher.

Both parsons and lawyers are barred from the colony founded on Edward Bellamy's book, *Looking Backward*, which was started at Nashua, and now numbers three thousand persons. In view of this exclusion, it is not at all surprising to hear that the colony has been successful from the start.

A strange mixture of beliefs will be found in the following inscription, which appears on a tombstone in Wormley churchyard:—

Sacred to the memory of
MR. WILLIAM FINCH,
Born 21st July, 1787,
Died 15th November, 1867.

"I believe in the resurrection of the dead"

Also of
WILLIAM PERCIVAL FINCH,
Died August 22nd, 1870,
In the 46th year of his age.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth"

Also
MARY ANN FINCH,
Wife of the above.

Happy Wesleyan ministers! The worldly goods of these men of God who are changing circuits are, we learn, being increased by the usual shower of tea-trays, time-pieces, umbrellas, and cheques.

William Jones, missionary, of Westbourne-park, was summoned at Marlborough-street for obstructing the police at a meeting in Hyde Park. The constable said he was watching an Atheist meeting in the Park when Jones came up to him and said: "Still upholding the Atheists at these illegal meetings?" The missionary refused to go away, and was eventually arrested. He now told the magistrate that he had a great reputation as a peaceable Christian man, though he admitted that he had a stick which "flourished itself." He added that he was persecuted by the police like the rest of the Christian martyrs, and the Atheists would eventually turn out to be his friends. In regard to the latter statement, it is possible that Jones may be disappointed. In the meantime, however, he has been fined forty shillings.

"Fathers," says Sam Jones, the Yankee revivalist—"Fathers, you had better go home to-night, pull your boys out of bed, and tan their hides. If you don't, they'll go to hell by the carload." This is a sample utterance of the vulgar talker whom many of the Christians of America regarded as a greater than Ingersoll. There is no accounting for taste—or its absence.

The American Theosophists do not admit that Mrs. Besant is the inheritor of Madame Blavatsky's mantle, and the universal goodwill of her business. They have a lady of their own who advances a first claim—Katherine A. Tingley, who runs a handsomely-printed paper called the *New Century*, which is more characterised by emotion than by intellect. The July 29 number, just to hand, has a mystical leaderette on the death of Ingersoll, whose spirit, we are told, will before long be reincarnated. But nobody will know it; Ingersoll himself won't know it. That is one of the beauties of Theosophy. It advances what no one can prove, or disprove.

An American preacher named Farrar, curiously enough, preached on Sunday in Westminster Abbey. One of the things he said was much like letting the cat out of the bag. He remarked that he expected to die some day, but was in no hurry to do so. Of course not. The very sky-pilots nowadays don't want to go to heaven until they must. They prefer a good, plump bird in the hand to any number of invisible birds in invisible bushes.

Even so learned and aristocratic a paper as the *Daily Mail* is apt to trip, for recently it compared a celebrated Italian writer to an author whom it called "Bandeluire" (*sic*). It is this sort of thing which gives point to the definition of the *Daily Mail* as "a paper edited by office-boys for office-boys."

We are informed that there is no truth in the rumor that Mr. Price Hughes intends to change the title of the *Methodist Times* to that of the *Methodist Story Teller*.

Freethinkers of Castellon, Valencia, Spain, have created a disturbance, says the *Catholic Times*, because the Catholics fixed over their doors small placards bearing the words, "Sacred Heart of Jesus." From this it might be supposed that Freethinkers had adopted the ancient methods of Catholic Spain in the way of persecuting unacceptable forms of private opinion. But what was the "disturbance"? Simply that the Freethinkers nailed over their doors counter-placards which the *C. T.* says bore "revolutionary inscriptions." Here we see a survival of the old endeavor of the Catholic system to drag in the civil law to its aid.

What were these so-called revolutionary inscriptions? Freethinkers would not reply to the "Sacred Heart of Jesus" with anything so wide of the mark as reflections on the temporal government. The *C. T.* gives it all away when it says that the Mayor ordered the placards of both kinds to be removed.

Failing to attend divine service is a punishable offence in the British navy. Poor Jack Tars!

There is no mistake about it; the severance between Hodge and the Church is making itself apparent more and more every day. A correspondent of the *Guardian* signing himself "A Troubled Vicar" writes to complain that his morning congregations are becoming "fine by degrees and beautifully less."

The clergy (he says), with few exceptions, are doing their best to get hold of their people, and yet the congregations are dwindling year after year. The men especially are conspicuous by their absence. Hardly one in ten of the laborers now attends the Church services. In this parish the morning congregations, not many years ago, were nearly as good as the evening ones (which are still fairly attended, although not so well as formerly), but now, where there used to be fifty or sixty, there are barely twenty. The farmers used to come twice on the Sunday, now they come two or three times a month. I am told this is also the case in the chapel. My clerical neighbors tell the same story.

The Lord might have looked after his own churches and chapels at Montserrat during the recent hurricane in the West Indian islands. But no, every one was destroyed by the storm which cruelly swept over the islands, causing many deaths and leaving the survivors homeless and destitute. Still, we are presided over by a Providence that carefully notes every sparrow that falls.

The Rome correspondent of the *Morning Leader* points out the strange coincidence that, within a few days, several priests have met with tragic deaths recently. The curate of a little village near Turin was struck dead by lightning,

another priest was poisoned by mistake, and now an Italian priest has been stabbed on his way to the sacristy by a revengeful parishioner. The watchful care of the Lord over those who serve him is wonderful.

The Society for the Conversion of the Jews ought to make much of the following little story, which, of course, is a pure invention: Some time ago the Jews in Odessa held a meeting to congratulate themselves upon the revision of the Dreyfus affair. A young Jew rose and said the revision of the Dreyfus case put the obligation upon all the Jews of the world to revise another unjust trial and sentence—namely, that of Jesus of Nazareth. He did not quite indicate how the "revision" in that case was to be effected. All that now can be done is for the Jews of the world to assemble and pass a resolution that Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross without a stain on his character. There is no other possible reparation, and, if we wait until that takes place, we shall have to wait a very long time.

A memorial against Sunday trains was presented to the half-yearly meeting of the London and North-Western Railway Company. It was signed by 1,500 shareholders. Lord Stalbridge, the Chairman, remarked that the Company had a fund into which went the dividends of shareholders who did not like to take them because they were earned on Sunday. The fund amounted to 11s. 9d.

The religious disturbances on the sands at Rhyll, which necessitated an appeal to Parliament a little time ago, have been repeated at Llandudno. The Rev. John Wood, the anti-Ritualistic clergyman, maintains that he has a perfect right to preach on the foreshore. Each evening he takes his stand there, and is immediately interrupted by the police, who request him to desist, and, upon a refusal, haul him down from his stand, and bodily carry him away. Having made his protest, Mr. Wood gives out a hymn, and adjourns to a mission room he has engaged.

Guernsey is so afflicted with the Sabbatarian craze that on Sundays no place of refreshment whatever is allowed to be opened on the island. The *Guernsey Evening Press*, commenting on the stupidity of the authorities, says: "On Sunday about 250 misguided individuals from Cherbourg paid us a visit. What could have possessed them to do anything so foolish we cannot imagine. Probably they were not aware of the sort of welcome that would be extended to them, or they would have stopped away. They could not get anything either to eat or drink, and they wandered about disconsolate, hungry, and thirsty. It is not at all likely that the same people will make the same mistake twice. It is not only unutterably foolish of us to treat people who come to see us in this way, but it is barbarous cruelty as well."

A Triente newspaper publishes a list of deceased persons who have been created "saints" by the Roman Catholic Church during the last three centuries. Their nationality is as follows:—Italians, 28; Spaniards, 17; Portuguese, 1; French, 6; Dutch, 12; Belgian, 4; Polish, 1; Germans, 2. It seems rather a reflection on Great Britain that, according to this statement, no one from our soil has been thought worthy of this distinction. The golden opportunity of earlier centuries having passed, there is very little hope for us in the future. The reflection brings with it a feeling of sadness.

Interviewed on the recent decision as to ritual, the Rev. A. W. Jephson, of Walworth, said he was of opinion that a great deal of time has been wasted in discussing practices which, even if generally adopted, would have little effect on the general well-being of the community. If the energy devoted to these disputes had been centred in endeavors to improve the housing of the working classes and the sanitation of the poorer districts, Mr. Jephson thinks that much more real good would have been done. He regards the whole dispute as contemptible.

Lord Kitchener's favorite book is said to be the Moham-medan Koran. He has a copy always with him. What's gone with his Bible? We always thought that every British soldier carried a New Testament in his pocket, if only to stop bullets.

More Sabbath stupidity. A Wrexham gentleman left a bequest for the provision of Sunday band concerts at Wrexham. The Rhos and Wrexham Ministers' Association have met and passed a resolution thanking the Rhos Silver Band and the Rhos Male Voice Party for refusing to give their services in connection with the trust.

Dr. Fairbairn, in an article in the *Contemporary Review*, gives to English readers a striking instance of how the idolatry of the mass as practised in England is looked upon

by the Hindu. "We," said the Hindu, "make an image or a symbol of our god, but we never confound either with the god it speaks of. The most illiterate person knows that there is one Vishnu and one Siva and one Vali, and that there is not such an infinite multitude of these deities as there are symbols or images in the land. But you, you take a piece of bread and a cup of wine; you mutter over them a prayer, and they straightway become the flesh and blood of your god, which you offer in sacrifice and then consume. In all Hinduism you will find no idolatry so gross as that."

Great credit is due to Mr. Labouchere for exposing in *Truth* a scandalous instance of the diversion of a charitable fund for the poor to purely Church purposes in the parish of Chobham. So long ago as 1827 the Charity Commissioners decided that the money was left for "the benefit of the industrious poor." Yet it has been, and still continues to be, applied by the churchwardens to the maintenance of the fabric of the Church and for other Church purposes. In the Chobham parochial magazine the churchwardens defend the continued misapplication by stating that the money is devoted to a public object, "the Church being freely opened to every parishioner who chooses to worship there."

Did ever anyone hear of such a barefaced fraud upon the poor, or such a contemptible attempt at justification? As *Truth* says, "there is not a shadow of doubt that the charity was left to the 'industrious poor,' and to the poor it should be given."

A correspondent of the *Cape Argus* says that, since residing in Cradock, he has been particularly struck with the sharpness of the juvenile population of the town. A Sunday-school teacher took a class of girls, and chose for his lesson the subject of the Prodigal Son. Expounding the parable, he told how all rejoiced at the return of the prodigal. One little maiden, however, piped forth: "Teacher, I know one who was not glad." "And who was that?" asked the teacher. "Please, teacher, it was the fatted calf!"

We hear a great deal about blessings from on High, though sometimes they appear to come in an unexpected and not altogether acceptable fashion. An aeronaut, having exhausted his sandbags, and finding his balloon still falling, threw overboard, one after the other, two light cane-bottomed chairs. The first grazed the back of a countryman who was digging potatoes. The man, rubbing his back, looked round and saw with surprise a chair lying at his feet. While he still gazed in wonderment, down flopped the second chair close by him. "Bill," cried the amazed yokel to a companion, "I say, Bill, they must have got the bailiffs in heaven!"

Christianity and the Japanese.

A SERIES of striking articles on the religious situation in Japan, and the comparative condition of Christianity and Buddhism at the present time, have appeared in the *Japanese Times* published at Tokio. The writer, described as a Christian, says: "Learned men from Japan who went abroad discovered that vice, crime, poverty, and depravity prevailed to a greater extent among Christian nations than in Japan before Christianity had been taught, while those who remained at home could not blind their eyes to the fact that immigrants from Christian nations brought into Japan vices and immoral practices which were unknown before their arrival, and would not be tolerated by a pagan people. Before the Christians arrived the Japanese were an honest, innocent, unsuspecting people. The Christians took advantage of their condition to swindle them, but the Japanese soon learned the tricks, and the commercial immorality that is now complained of is due to their quick imitation of foreign customs."

Obituary.

It is with deep sorrow that I record the death, after a very short illness, of Mr. Richard Samuel Smith, on August 2, aged fifty-six years. He was a member of the Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse Branch of the N. S. S. for nearly twenty years, and he was president for several years. He was a good working member and a staunch supporter, always ready to help the cause with his brains as well as his pocket. He sat on the Devonport School Board for several years, having completely broken down the prejudice against him which was so hostile when he first stood for the Board, and went in at the top of the poll. He was the best-known Secularist in the Three Towns, and his place will be hard to fill.—G. F. H. McCLUSKEY.

The Dundee *Evening Telegraph* prints a column and a half of appreciative notice of "The Dead Agnostic"—Colonel Ingersoll—ostensibly from the pen of a Dundee Lassie in New York.

Special.

I AM writing another brief "Special" at the seaside, but I shall be back in London by the time this week's *Freethinker* is in its readers' hands. My first duty in returning will be to form the projected Company for which I have been asking support. This will not take long. In about a fortnight those whose promises I have received and acknowledged will be requested to take shares legally on the basis of a formal Prospectus which will be sent them by post.

Owing to this absence from London my correspondence is sadly disorganised. However, I acknowledge the fresh promises that have reached me since I wrote out the last list for the printer. I add, for the sake of some who may be pleased to hear it, that I am in the best of health and eager for work. Perhaps this fact will encourage the laggards to forward me their promises speedily.

G. W. FOOTE.

P.S.—The following are the promises of support already received, the figure after each name indicating the number of £1 shares:—

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 (says), 1,000; Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, 25; Mr. W. Hardaker, 20; Mr. Joseph Guy, 15; Mr. B. L. Coleman, 10; Mr. L. Gjemre, 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 B. M. 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, 5; 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. Neate, 2; Mr. George Taylor, 2; Mr. H. Poyser, 2; Mr. John Waller, 5; Mr. J. Bullock, 2; Mr. A. F. Bullock, 1; Dr. R. T. Nichols, 10; Mr. J. Keast, 1; Mr. R. Dowling, 1; Mr. J. G. Thompson, 2; Mr. Albert Smart, 5; Mr. Richard Carroll, 10; Mr. J. M. Day, 1; Mr. W. N. Sweetman, 5; Mrs. D. P. Sweetland, 2; Mr. T. H. Seymour, 10; Mr. C. Hayes, 2; Mr. H. Barratt, 5; Mrs. Charlotte S. Gillin, 1; 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, 1; 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; Mr. J. W. Dawson, 2; Mr. Peter Dawson, 2; Mr. A. Lewis, 2; Mr. David Watt, 1; M. H. J., 5; Mr. Luke Vickers, 2; Mr. J. Fish, 1; Mr. S. Holmes, 2; J. W. Griffiths, 1; Mr. J. T. Embleton, 2; Secular Society Limited, 20; Mr. George Ennon, 5; Mr. J. C. Pickett, 1; Mr. Jas. Baker, 1; Mr. J. M. McInnes, 2; Mr. J. Skiffish, 10; Mr. E. Wilson, 5; Mr. John Proctor, 10; Mr. R. Robinson, 1; Mrs. Mensbier, 5; Mr. E. C. Cooke, 20; Mr. R. F. Garvey, 2; Mr. J. Seddon, 1; Mr. Frederick Ryan, 4; Mr. J. Garry, 3; Mr. William Barks, 2; Mr. Arthur Button, 5; Mr. J. Pegg, 1; Mr. C. Cohen, 2; Mr. C. Pegg, 5; Mrs. M. E. Whitta, 1; Mr. A. E. Elderkin, 1; Mr. J. Jones, 5; Mr. T. E. Whitta, 1; Mr. H. F. Sesemann, 20; Mr. B. Dudley, 2; Mr. Joseph Preett, 10; Mr. J. C. Banks, 3; Mr. J. Oscar, 1; Mr. Robert Gibbon, 5; Dr. E. B. Foote (New York), 5; Mr. J. Ferguson, 1; Mr. W. J. K. Rider, 2. Total, 3,066.

This week's acknowledgments:—

- Mr. Thomas Johnson, 10; Mrs. A. W. Huty, 1; Blackburn Branch, 2; Mr. James Weston, 5; Mr. David Jones, 5; Mr. E. Jackson, 1; Mr. W. H. Deakin, 2; Mr. R. Henry, 1; Mr. T. Perkins, 1; Mr. William Mitchell, 2; Mr. Henry Trotman, 5; Mr. J. M., 1; Mr. G. H. Williamson, 2; Mr. G. Fryar, 2; Mr. F. S. Finden, 1; Mr. Albert Hebble, 1; Mr. G. A. Lovett, 1.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 3, Athenæum Hall, London; 10, South Shields; 17, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 3, New Brompton; 10 and 17, Athenæum, 73 Tottenham Court-road; 24, Birmingham. October 1, Sheffield; 29, Glasgow. November 12, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

J. S. FINDEN.—Your letter does just as well. No doubt there are many, like yourself, who wish they could take twenty shares, but can only take one. Still, they should take the one, rather than none at all.

G. W. BLYTHE.—Thanks for cutting. See paragraph.

G. A. LOVETT.—You may be able to take more shares by and bye, but it is well to make a beginning now. Thanks also for your good wishes.

H. C. LONG.—Pleased to receive your interesting letter. We are afraid you will continue to meet brutal bigots in your attempts to propagate Freethought. But you do not seem likely to be easily deterred.

HENRY PORTER.—We did not intend the slightest reflection on Captain Monro. We merely expressed regret that the Secular cause does not profit as much as it used to do by his valuable services. We agree with you that something ought to be done at Hull, and that an energetic local leader is a great desideratum. When we have the new Company fairly started we shall be able to give more personal attention to the organisation of the Secular movement throughout the country.

DONOVAN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A. W. HUTTY.—It is a pleasure to see ladies interesting themselves in Freethought.

AMBER (Glasgow).—You will find what you require in Mr. Foote's "Bible Romances"—the one entitled *A Virgin Mother*, price twopence.

J. E. HARLEY.—If the Blackburn Branch wishes to take two shares in the new Company, it will have to hold them through some person as a moral trustee, as the Branch is not a legally constituted body. Thanks, anyhow.

A. R. MONRO (Hull).—Your letter came to hand too late for notice in our last issue. We never said that you were a *passive* Secularist. No doubt you help to push along the cause in your movements about the town. Our reference was solely to Freethought organisation, which you admit wants seeing to in Hull. There we agree, and there the matter may be left. For the rest, we assure you that you have our best wishes.

A CORRESPONDENT who sends us a brief cutting on Ingersoll from the *Clarion*, dated August 5, says:—"You see what 'Nunquam' is capable of. A man who devotes twenty-four lines to Ingersoll and a column to a pair of jackdaws must have a kink in his brain—a bee in his bonnet."

J. KEAST.—Your letter was too late for last week's *Freethinker*. We do not think it is worth while troubling about Freethought organisation in Bristol just at the present moment. A little later on, perhaps, a definite and continuous effort may be made under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive.

EDWARD JACKSON, who takes one share in the new Company now, and hopes to take more in future, writes: "Two Churchmen are now taking in the *Freethinker* through reading my copy. As to reducing the price, do nothing of the kind; twopence is little enough."

T. PERKINS.—If all helped according to their means and opportunities, our cause would make greater progress.

GLASGOW READER speaks highly of Mr. Cohen's articles on Pain and Providence. "I am glad to think," he adds, "that you have got the measure of the Spiritualists. If Ingersoll has anything to say now, let him say it through Mr. Foote or Mr. Watts."

G. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

G. FRYAR.—Your letter does just as well.

G. MCCLUSKEY.—Your obituary of the late R. S. Smith, of Devonport, did not reach us in time for last week's issue. We insert it this week, though it looks rather belated now. We knew Mr. Smith well, and held him in the highest respect. We blow to the movement in the Three Towns to lose both Mr. Barter and Mr. Smith in one year.

W. A. NEWCOMB.—All orders for literature should be sent direct to Mr. Forder. Sending them to Mr. Foote gives him trouble, and often causes delay, as in the present case, owing to Mr. Foote's absence from London. We have made no special arrangement for the supply of the *Freethinker* at Liverpool since the death of Mr. Stocker.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your valued cuttings.

FREDERICK RYAN.—We are obliged to you for the American papers which had, however, already reached us from a correspondent across the Atlantic.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—Received with thanks.

PRISM BROWN.—You can obtain the journal you mention from Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

J. HERRING.—It is a subject that requires fuller treatment.

R. CHAPMAN.—Your lecture notice for last week was not posted at South Shields till Tuesday, and it reached our office on Wednesday.

G. A. LOVETT.—Certainly, as you say, a change has come over the scene when a Christian is run in for disturbing an Atheist meeting.

G. W. B.—We have nothing to add to what we have previously said. It is idle to say that we are dogmatising because we decline to believe without evidence. Thanks for the cutting.

G. H. WILLIAMSON.—We have included your name in the list. You will find the conditions suit your conscience. We fancy the volume of verse by Dunbar, the negro poet, is published at 5s. Our own copy was bought some time ago, and we are not quite sure what we gave for it.

E. WILSON.—We are not surprised that the *Daily Mail* did not answer your request for an authorisation of the silly story of Ingersoll's being silenced at Toronto.

H. PERCY WARD.—Your letter reaches us too late for this week's issue. We shall be happy to insert such a paragraph in our next.

A. R. JONES.—No doubt a good many readers, like yourself, will look forward to the Library Edition of Ingersoll's lectures, addresses, writings, etc., which we hope to see produced by the new Company. Of course it will involve a large expenditure at the outset.

SOME correspondence stands over till next week in consequence of the editor's absence from London.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Secular Thought—Open Court—Torch of Reason—Blue Grass Blade—Western Mail—Evening Telegraph (Dundee)—Free Society—Ethical World—Crescent—Western Evening Herald—North American—Public Opinion—Free-thought Magazine—Der Arme Teufel—Sydney Bulletin—De Vrije Gedachte—Awakener of India—New York Sun—New York Herald—Progressive Thinker—Isle of Man Times—Liberator—Freidenker—Truthseeker (N. Y.)—People's Newspaper.

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.

LONDON Freethinkers are desired to note that the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, will be reopened for Sunday evening lectures on September 3, when Mr. Foote will occupy the platform and deliver a special introductory lecture. Mr. Charles Watts will follow Mr. Foote for two Sundays.

A Freethought demonstration takes place in Battersea Park to-day (Sunday) at 3.30. Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Moss, and Heaford will address the meeting, which will be held in the part of the Park usually assigned to public assemblages. A brake will be used as a platform.

The excursion to Littlehampton on Sunday, August 27, of which particulars will be found in our advertisement columns, promises to be a success. But we should like it to be a bumping success. We hope the London Freethinkers will rally in strong force on this festive occasion. There ought to be a party of five hundred at least. Most of the leading men in the N. S. S. will join the excursion, including Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Forder, etc.

In completing the arrangements for the Freethinkers' outing, Miss Vance has visited Littlehampton, and recommends the refreshment caterers whose addresses are printed on the handbills announcing the excursion. If those who intend visiting Arundel and other places of interest will give her previous notice, she will engage char-a-bancs, and thus prevent parties being split up. The return fare per these vehicles is 1s. 6d. Miss Vance suggests that, to prevent disappointment, the purchase of tickets should not be left until Sunday morning. The railway authorities do not encourage the sale of private excursion tickets on their premises, and the man with the tickets may be difficult to find, added to which the Committee are doing their level best to sell out.

The *Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, reproduces Mr.

Foot's article on "Dying Like a Dog." Editor Shaw's monthly is always welcome over here. He maintains it at a high level of excellence. We only hope that the circulation is equal to its merits.

The *Western Evening Herald* (Plymouth) notes the fact that Sir Robert Stout, the new Chief Justice of New Zealand, is singular among the occupants of high judicial office in being an avowed Atheist. He was formerly known as "the Bradlaugh of the Antipodes." Sir Robert Stout is fifty-five years of age. He was born in the Shetland Islands.

The *Western Mail* supplement last week contained a story by Ivy Desmond of an atheistic Doctor Harcourt, who did good amongst the poor, and was buried at last by a clergyman who said he was "a truer Christian than many a man so-called." There is a certain lack of intellectual grip in such writing, but it shows an altered tone in the general mind, which we hail with satisfaction. It is something when Atheists in popular stories cease to be devils; it is something more when they become doubt-distracted angels.

The centre of the world's interest just now is at Rennes. Dreyfus is on trial again, and is gaining more sympathy every day. His outburst of passion on Monday gained him many friends amongst the dramatic French people. Some of them thought him too cold and collected. They did not reflect how for five long years he had to school himself in self-control until it became a settled habit. Only in that way could he pass through his awful ordeal. His enemies were seeking his death. He knew it, and he had to suffer in silence in order not to give them fresh opportunities for cruelty. On one occasion, as we now learn, a warder actually hit him over the head with a heavy stick. And he could not resent it, but had to bow submissively for the sake of the future, for the sake of his wife and children, for the sake of his reputation. But on Monday he showed some of the old fire with which he stood proudly erect and protested his innocence during the infamous ceremony of his degradation. He stood up again before the Court Martial at Rennes, facing General Mercier with clenched fist, and told that leading villain of the piece what was his duty—namely, to confess that he had grievously wronged an innocent man. The scene was intensely dramatic, and Dreyfus was actually applauded.

Every honest man who has any sense is perfectly satisfied that Dreyfus is innocent. But the Church and the Army are against him, and are moving heaven and earth to have him found guilty by hook or by crook. They know there is no real case against him, but they rely upon prejudice and all sinister influences. Still, we believe that Dreyfus will be acquitted. If he is sent back to his unspeakable torture in order to gratify the interests opposed to his vindication, the whole world will look upon France as a dishonored and doomed nation. But we cannot believe it will come to that. Our trust is in the open trial. Behind the judges stands the conscience of civilisation, looking on with steady, implacable eyes.

The fight involves more than the fate of Dreyfus, as we have said all along. The *Daily News* correspondent put it plainly on Monday: "The Dreyfus trial is really one of strength between the party that made the great Revolution and the combined parties that have ever since prevented its Republican and popular evolution." Fortunately the Ministry is now on the true Republican side, and General Gallifet is dealing firmly with the military traders in sedition—men who forget that they are soldiers and fancy they are politicians.

One of the Dreyfus stories enables us to think a little better of common human nature. When the authorities, out of mere wantonness or malignity, ordered him to be put in irons every night on that awful Devil's Island, his immediate gaolers took pity upon him and did their best to relieve his misery. They crept into his cell and padded his gyves with a handkerchief or scarf in order to prevent the iron from eating into his sore flesh; and they returned at daybreak to remove the evidence of their charity. The poor prisoner dared not speak; he could only look his thanks to those kind-hearted fellows.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie's long-promised collection of Free-thought verses—many if not most of them contributed from time to time to our own columns—is published this week by Mr. Forder. The title of *Brimstone Ballads* is a racy one. It should catch the eye and arrest attention. Mr. Foot's has supplied an Introduction at the author's request. We hope the volume, which is neat and cheap, will have a considerable sale, if only to compensate Mr. Mackenzie for the pens, ink, and paper he must have consumed in the mechanical part of the production of these poems. Had he turned his gifts of satire and pointed versification to politics, instead of devoting them to Free-thought, he might have realised a handsome profit.

Absolution by Telephone.

WHAT next? Confession and absolution by telephone is surely a very curious, as it is quite the latest, attempt to make science the handmaiden of religion. It has not yet been sanctioned and carried into effect, but it is seriously proposed in the Roman Catholic Church, and is now under the solemn consideration of the Holy See.

The proposal may excite a smile on the part of the ungodly. Even the pious Catholic may, at the first blush, look upon it somewhat askance as an odd use of the appliances of this world in connection with the preparation for kingdom come. But it is quite within the range of possible accomplishment, especially as it is believed that the Vatican, so far, is rather inclined to favor its adoption.

Besides, the Protestant Church has almost prepared the way for the innovation; for have we not recently heard of sermons and hymns conveyed by telephone from the conventicles in which they were preached and sung to patients in hospitals, and to sick persons in their homes? There is the notable example of the Prince of Wales, who—when confined indoors at Osborne by the accident which happened to him—was put in communication by telephone with a fashionable church in the West End. Then it was that he had the doubtful pleasure of listening to a sermon full of fulsome allusions to himself and his misadventure. Probably the Royal patient would much have preferred the telephone to be used on that particular Lord's Day for quite another purpose—say, for instance, the transmission of the latest news from Newmarket, the acceptances, arrivals, trials, starting prices and tips. As it was, he, no doubt, speedily turned his Royal ear from the sickening gush, and betook himself to a quiet game at cards. We haven't noticed that that preacher has yet been favored with any preferment. He probably now

Subsists on hope,
The distant good that mocks approach.

But there are other interesting instances of spiritual consolation by telephone—more or less acceptable to the recipients. That great man, Dr. Parker, has been a ghostly visitant at the bedside of sickness, restraining himself, we are glad to say, from uttering near the telephone receiver in his Temple any such shocking swear words as that which fell from his lips on an ever-to-be-regretted occasion. So that, after all, confession and absolution by this modern medium would be simply a development of what has already taken place.

Only under certain conditions, and in cases of urgent necessity, is it at present proposed by Catholics to thus press science into the service of the Lord. It would certainly be unlawful for a confessor to use the telephone as a means of hearing the confession and absolving the absent person when there was time and opportunity for those solemn religious duties to be performed in the ordinary and prescribed way. Where the penitent is in danger of death, and cannot be reached in time, it is thought that the instrument might be fittingly used. With the usual keenness of Romish casuistry, it is subtly argued that, as the priest and penitent might in such a case be truly said to be conversing together, they might also be said to be morally present to each other, and thus the requirement of the Church would be fulfilled.

We must, however, possess our souls in patience until we receive the pronouncement of the Vatican upon this grave and delicate question, which may be fraught with many consequences at present unforeseen.

Obviously, if the expedient is sanctioned and carried into practice, the utmost care will have to be exercised. As we suppose the rev. father confessors will make timely provision for these emergencies by leaving with ailing penitents some such card as:—

THE VERY REV. FATHER CAPIDIPELLO, S.O.B.,
Sanctuary of the Sacred Heart.

Telephone No. 10597.

It will be imperatively necessary for the penitent when he inquires, "Are you there?" to be quite sure that the Very Rev. Father is there, and not, by accident, some one else. Too dreadful to contemplate would be the

distressing results if, by chance, the penitent were wrongly switched on, and, in his impatience, started off with a breathless recital of his sins to an astonished and unsympathetic stranger. Great care, too, would have to be taken that the young ladies at the Central Telephonic Exchange had no opportunity of hearing any of these secret and confidential communications—especially those peculiarly private interrogations which priests are permitted to make, and to which penitents are expected to unequivocally reply.

But these, of course, are details to which due attention will be paid when the Catholic hierarchy have given their consent to the ingenious proposal. That there will be long hesitation and many misgivings before that sanction is accorded we may be tolerably sure. There is an "up-to-dateness" about the suggestion that seems strikingly at variance with the spirit of a Church which prides herself upon her adherence to primitive forms and customs—being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—at least, until that oft-predicted end of the world arrives.

If such an assent be secured from the Holy See, there is still some doubt whether penitents, even in a parlous state, may not be disinclined to avail themselves of the privilege. It is a great deal to expect a male member of the Church, and still more a female, to shout—if strengthened remains—through a mechanical arrangement like the telephone, details of a string of offences, some of which may be of a strictly private nature. And to do this, too, with a possible running commentary from the other end of "What do you say?" "What's that?" "Repeat it," and "Speak up, can't you?" The sort of dialogue that will occur may be left to the reader's imagination. To whisper an avowal of transgressions into the ear of the priest in the seclusion and privacy of the confessional box is quite another matter, though that at times requires a certain amount of nerve and a great deal of self-abasement. Many ladies, however piously inclined, might feel a natural reluctance to unbosom themselves on a cold telephonic wire.

Possibly, in view of the condition of the penitents who would be telephonically confessed and telephonically absolved, questions such as those suggested by St. Alphonso M. de Liguori, of pious memory, might be dispensed with, as they would ordinarily, and the instruments and wires thereby kept reasonably clean for other and purer purposes. But the telephone would be of undoubted service to the Church in eliciting, ere the fleeting breath had passed away, whether the penitent had made due atonement for his sins by adequate bequests for Catholic purposes. If he hadn't, the priest, of course, could "ring off" at once, as a mark of sovereign displeasure. The penitent would then be left with no alternative but to send for a lawyer, or die and be damned.

Absolution would not be accompanied by many difficulties. As it is said that the faithful in listening to their confessors are listening to Christ himself, there would be an inexpressible charm and consolation in hearing the Savior through this medium—an invention which would have struck his disciples dumb in their day, though, of course, he himself knew, whilst wandering in Galilee, that eventually it would come to pass, with X rays, motor-cars, women cyclists, and many other wonders which he did not think it worth while to predict.

Of this, at least, we may be sure: When Pope Innocent III., in A.D. 1215, instituted the confessional—that system which, it has rightly been said, makes the priest a god and the penitent a goose—he never dreamt in his wildest dreams that in this year of grace it would be proposed to be carried out in such an astoundingly novel fashion.

FRANCIS NEALE.

The Very Common Book of Prayer.

"*The Book of Common Prayer*," *Appointed to be Read in Churches.* (1899.)—This volume is an interesting addition to the literature of the holiday season. By this time the average man will probably be tired of the humorous writings of Mr. Charles Sheldon, and even the Holy Bible may bore after a second reading. The fun of the Book of Common Prayer is of a more gentle character. To be fully appreciated, its pages should be lazily scanned at some seaside or country resort, far from the madding crowd. The wisdom of the Church of England cannot be appreciated amid the hurry and bustle of the metropolis. It should be lazily scanned whilst the reader is stretched at length upon the grass or sand, soothed by the drowsy hum of insects, or the happy laughter of children at play.

There is one advantage about this book. It does not matter where you commence reading. Whether one starts with the Baptism of Infants, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Athanasian Creed, or the Lugubrious Litany, or any other diversion, does not signify in the least. It has, therefore, one point of superiority over most other books.

The reader should be carefully warned that the author of this volume is true to the old-fashioned ideals of politics. As the writer is anonymous, we have no means of knowing his or her precise age. But we think we are justified, by internal evidence, in treating this book as a first appearance in print. This will partially excuse the lick-spittle references to Royalty which, we regret, disfigure the volume, and which are only paralleled by the disgustingly servile dedication of the Holy Bible to that padded and half-forgotten buffoon, King Jimmy I. So extravagant was this eulogy that, as a child, we really thought the Almighty's front name was James. The reader must skim the work gently, and not take the writer too seriously. Otherwise he will probably be under the impression that the sun has loosened a tile in his upper storey.

There is an unexpected touch of temper in "The Commination Service." The denouncing of God's anger against sinners might get on a delicate reader's nerves. But, looked at from the proper standpoint, it should be as delightful as the never-to-be-forgotten anathemas in *The Jackdaw of Rheims* or the rantings of a villain in a melodrama, who curses everybody on the stage, hurls maledictions at the dress-circle, spits at the orchestra, and shakes his fist at the gallery.

The splenetic humor of the Commination Service makes the refrain of "miserable sinners," which recurs throughout the Litany, positively welcome; a sort of comic relief. We would especially recommend the prayers for "Our Sovereign Lady," Mrs. Guelph, and all the other members of her family, to the notice of members of the Primrose League, Licensed Victuallers, and all Conservative Clubs. A few judicious quotations skillfully introduced into after-dinner speeches and addresses from the hustings would be sure to tickle the ears of the groundlings and provoke loud cheers.

There is a delicate touch in the table of kindred the reader is advised not to marry. It is a glorious incentive to virtue to inform a man that he must not connubialise with his grandmother. No one except a "right reverend father-in-God" ever supposed that he would want to. But we will hurl the gruesome suggestion from us! This is one of the few blemishes in an otherwise promising volume. The Burial Service is a little disquieting. A few passages actually lead us to suppose that not all the persons who turn up their toes in consecrated ground "better" themselves; but some even go to "another place," which is never mentioned in polite society. The exordium in the Marriage Service is just a wee bit too-utter. Bashful curates will, probably, soon find it necessary to wear masks whilst addressing the unfortunate victims.

The average Englishman always has one topic of conversation—the state of the weather. The author of this volume, with great acuteness, has included prayers for rain and for fair weather. There are, we notice, other recipes against plague, famine, battle, murder, and sudden death, and, for what we know, housemaids' knee. It is a sort of Theological Inquire Within upon Everything. We regret that we have not time to

"Was my sermon long this morning?" asked a clergyman who had been taken to task for running over time. "No, my dear doctor," was the reply of a parishioner; "it was not long—it only seemed so."

"And secondly, my dear brethren," said the parson in the midst of a very long discourse. "Amen, papa," cried the parson's tiny daughter, who had noticed that the service always ended with "Amen."

examine this most interesting portion so thoroughly as we should have liked.

The Communion Service gives full instructions to the reader how to obtain a spiritual nature, through the hole in his face, by the simple and pleasing process of feeding. So long as a man has a bottle of Gilbey's shilling port, and is near a baker's shop, he has always the material for turning out a plaster saint. This valuable information is alone well worth the price of the whole volume.

The Thirty-nine Articles are as cheerful reading as *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*, in which the trains depart, but never arrive anywhere. Do not imagine, however, that the useful properties of the Articles end here. Try them on Ritualistic sky-pilots, and we have reason to believe that the result will be that you will remove them as effectually as somebody's powder does fleas. These hints for the guidance of Mr. John Smith, nonconformist and cheesemonger, are invaluable.

What infinite possibilities does not the Catechism unfold? We all know "what fools these mortals be." Here are the ways and means for making the little child into a member of the Church of England and a Conservative, now that "the strongest government of modern times" is getting itself disliked. Lord Salisbury might do worse than force Parliament to introduce this book into our Board-schools. Dismissing this instrument of torture, we turn to the Baptism of Infants, which would undoubtedly be found a healthy and invigorating exercise, especially with the addition of a little soap. Those that are "of riper years" might add a scrubbing-brush. The Athanasian Creed is somewhat heavy and indigestible; there is a solemn, Miltonic roll about the sentences. We humbly suggest that the author delete the repetitions in any future edition, and substitute the names of Ally, Tootsie, and Alexander Sloper for the parties now mentioned in the book. We feel sure such a course would let a little "sweetness and light" into this four-cornered prize-puzzle in mathematics. And now—

"Good-bye; and better health
Attend your majesties."

MIMNERMUS.

Ingersoll's Cremation.

On the mantelpiece beneath which the body of Robert Ingersoll reposed for six days after his death there was a bronze urn last night. In this urn was what was left of the body after it had passed through the retorts of the Fresh Pond Crematory.

The loving wife and daughters had before them the urn and its contents, instead of the tangible reminder of the man they adored which had been the object of their vigils for a week.

In keeping with the events since the death of Colonel Ingersoll was the final disposition of his remains. Jealously those who had loved him clung to what was left of him to the last. Strangers had nothing to do with the carrying out of the arrangements, save in what was absolutely necessary in the line of the duty of the undertaker's assistants and the employes of the crematory at Fresh Pond. And even while the body of the Agnostic was being reduced to ashes the retort was watched by men tied to him in life by bonds of family relationship.

VIGIL DURING THE NIGHT.

All night long Mrs. Ingersoll and her daughters sat by the side of Colonel Ingersoll's body in voiceless grief. With the dawn came men employed by the undertaker. They carried with them a plain black coffin. The women left the room, and into the coffin the men placed the body. No grave clothes enshrouded it. The sheet that had covered the corpse was all that wrapped the lifeless form.

As soon as the body had been placed in the casket Mrs. Ingersoll and her daughters re-entered the room with their arms full of flowers. These they placed in the coffin, completely covering the shell that had been so much to them when animated. After this for two hours they were left alone with the dead.

A special train, composed of the funeral car Kensico and a coach, was at the Dobbs Ferry Station in readiness for the transfer of the remains to New York. The start was made from the house shortly before 9 o'clock. There were no pallbearers. The coffin was carried down the stairs by Mr. Walston Brown, Colonel Ingersoll's son-in-law; Mr. Herbert Brown, Major Orlando Smith, and the undertaker's men. Handles had been placed on the coffin at the last moment, but they were not used. The casket was carried by hands that grasped it underneath.

Following the coffin came Mrs. Ingersoll, supported by her daughters, Mrs. Brown and Maud Ingersoll; Mr. C. P. Farrell and his wife, Mrs. Ingersoll's sister; Miss Eva Farrell, Clarence Brown, Dr. Brady, and Mr. Frederick Penfield. The grandchildren, ignorant of what was going on, were kept in a secluded room of the house in the care of a servant. Three negro maids who had been in Colonel Ingersoll's family for years came after.

SHOPS IN TOWN ARE CLOSED.

The coffin was placed in the hearse at the door, and the mourners entered five carriages drawn up along the driveway. Down through the winding drives of the handsome country seat and out into the town the cortege went. Many shops in Dobbs Ferry were closed as a mark of respect, and along the streets scores of men who saw the procession pass removed their hats.

At the train the coffin was carried by the same persons that had conveyed it to the hearse at the house. The members of the family and their few invited friends boarded the funeral car. In the coach also rode the devoted negro servants of Colonel Ingersoll's family.

The start from Dobbs Ferry was made at 9.30 o'clock, and forty-five minutes later the train was in the Grand Central Station. There was quite a crowd along the platform, and many heads were bared as the coffin was carried along to be placed in a hearse in waiting.

The funeral procession made its way to the foot of East Thirty-fourth street and aboard a Long Island ferryboat for Long Island City. No attention was attracted on the boat, for funerals are common on this line of transportation, and even had it been known that Colonel Ingersoll's body was aboard, the fact would have been taken as a matter of course.

BODY ARRIVES AT THE CREMATORY.

It is not a long ride from the ferry landing in Long Island City to the Fresh Pond Crematory, which stands out garishly on top of a high hill, flanked by a cemetery on one side, beer gardens on two sides, and a vista of oil mills and factories on the remaining side. Everything was in readiness for the reception of the body, and a crowd of curious persons had gathered about the gates.

Mrs. Ingersoll, her daughters, and some of the mourners went to the columbarium or room for the storage of urns. This is also called the chapel, and in it services are sometimes held over the bodies of those to be cremated. In order that the body of Colonel Ingersoll should not pass through what might by any construction be called a chapel, it was taken into the cremation room through a side door. Mr. Farrell, Mr. Walston Brown, and Mr. Herbert Brown assisted the crematory attendants in carrying the coffin.

The body arrived at the crematory at 11.30 o'clock. It was taken from the coffin immediately, and the coffin was sent away to be broken up and burned. The body was placed on a sheet saturated with alum that was spread across a carriage that ran on rubber-tired wheels. The sheet was wrapped around the form, and the carriage was rolled to the door of the middle of three retorts in the crematory.

HEAR DIRGES FOR ANOTHER MAN.

The door of the retort was opened, and two men with long iron hooks pushed a sort of cradle of iron, on which the body lay, into the white heat ahead. The doors were closed and clamped, and a small vent to allow of the watching of the process of destruction was plugged with clay.

The Ingersoll family had been given to understand that the cremation would be strictly private; but no sooner had the body been placed in the retort than up the driveway rolled another funeral. Into the columbarium trooped a great crowd of mourners after the body of George Tallman. He had been a Freethinker, and there were no funeral services; but when the coffin had been carried back to the retort room, one sat down to a great organ in the big vaulted space lined with hundreds of urns containing ashes, and played dirges.

Mrs. Ingersoll was unable to restrain her composure under this. Her husband had been such a lover of music in life that music at his funeral services was prohibited lest it might add to the poignancy of the grief of those left behind. She was forced to flee from the columbarium, and with her went her daughters and her sister and the servants.

At the same time the gates of the crematory were thrown open and great crowds of curiosity-seekers poured in. Mr. Farrell went across the street to the Crematory Hotel, and tried to get a room for the women. He could not secure one, and was forced to lead them to seats in a beer garden back of the hotel, where they sat while the body was being reduced to ashes.

Funeral parties flocked to the hotel and the beer garden and ate and drank and made as merry as they could under the circumstances. The waiters in the hotel refused to serve lemonade to Mrs. Ingersoll and her daughters, and the members of the family had to carry it to them.

Over in the crematory the organ was played, and the sounds of the solemn music were wafted to the mourners in the beer garden across the road. They were the butt of the curiosity of hundreds, for there is no privacy to be obtained within the limits of the walls of the Fresh Pond Crematory. Sculptor Barnard, who took the death-mask of Colonel

Ingersoll, had been commissioned to find an urn for the ashes. He went to Tiffany's, and found one that had just been imported from Paris. Mrs. Farrell and Mrs. Brown inspected it, and pronounced it satisfactory. This urn was in the incineration room awaiting the completion of the operation.

The urn is a magnificent work in bronze, weighing probably twenty pounds. It rests on a square base of porphyry on a brass plate. Twined about it are representations in bas relief of wreaths of laurel and cypress-leaves. Its face bears the following inscription:—

L'Urne Garde
La Poussierre
Le Coeur
Le Souvenir.

The translation of this is: "This urn guards the dust, the heart, and the memory."

The back of the urn is ornamented with the simple inscription:—

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Herbert Brown remained in the incineration room until the ashes were taken from the retort, which was done at five o'clock. He poured the ashes from the receptacle into which they had been scraped into the urn, and then Mrs. Ingersoll, Mrs. Brown, and Miss Maude Ingersoll, after a wait of five hours, were admitted. For the first time they saw the gaping mouths of the retorts, but they paid no attention to them. They wept hysterically as they gazed on all that was left of the beloved body of their idol.

Mr. Brown carried the urn to a carriage, placed it on the seat, where flowers that had been in the coffin had been previously arranged. Mrs. Ingersoll sat beside it, the others entered other carriages, and the ride to the Grand Central Station was begun.

A special train was awaiting the party at the Grand Central Station, and they were taken to Dobbs Ferry in express time. As they reached the big stone house on the hill the storm-clouds broke, and the rain came down and sprinkled the urn.

—*New York Journal*, July 28.

The Dying Convert.

When I was told I 'adn't long to live,
I shivered-like, though sweat stood on my brow.
The parson said: "Jehovah will forgive
If you'll believe in Jesus even now."

"Forgive me what?" says I; "I never done
No 'arm to 'im—you ask 'im when you meet!"
"If you've done 'arm, my friend, to anyone,
Pray now to Christ," 'e says in accents sweet—

"'E will save you,
'E will save you,
Wash your sins away."

I prayed, an' peace come straightway to my 'art;
The strings what bound my sins to me 'ad broke,
An' fine an' glad I was wi' them to part;

To carry them, I tell you, was no joke!
What was them sins? Well, once I robbed a till.
My master was the very best of men.
An' says to me, "I'll keep you, Johnny, still
if you'll reform"—I sneaked 'is cash agen.....

But Christ 'as saved me,
Died an' saved me,
Washed my sins away.

Another sin? Well, this one wasn't black,
But still I'm glad 'is blood 'as washed it out.
When out of work (through drink I got the sack)
My brothers used to call me "lazy lout";

But mother allus called me 'er dear lad.
Though ill, she slaved as 'ard as 'ard could be
To find me beer an' baccy. Well, I'm glad
'Er death won't be attributed to me!

Jesus bears them,
Jesus bears them,
Bears my sins away.

My morals 'ave been easy—rather loose;
I've give to many a lass a earthly 'ell.
Of every chance of sinnin' I've made use,
But mostly when that "chance" 'as been a gel.

One like a duchess dressed walks out o' night,
A lot of rouge an' powder on 'er face;
She once was pretty, now she is a fright,
And I—well, I'm a sinner saved by grace.

Jesus loves me,
Jesus loves me,
Takes my sins away.

Sometimes, when I 'ad 'ad a drop of drink
I used to 'it the missus in the eye;
It is a wonder, now I come to think,
As 'ow, sometime, the critter didn't die!

Where is she now? A-snivellin' downstairs
'Cos she's a-losin' all she's got to love?
Come, parson, it gets dark—let's 'ave your prayers,
An' later on, old man, we'll meet above.

Chorus of Angels:—

Jesus loves him,
Jesus loves him;
He is white as snow.

J. Y.

Book Chat.

MR. LE GALLIENNE'S latest book, *Young Lives*, will not by any means add to his reputation. The plain truth is that Mr. Le Gallienne cannot write a novel. To introduce in the pages of a book a number of young persons, varying in age from eighteen to twenty-two, and to arrange so that they fall in love and marry, and to use these characters as pegs on which to hang one's theories, is not to be a novelist. Nor are matters mended by the very frequent mention of "twining of arms" and kissing of "rosebud lips." The story is altogether wanting in point. The theories advanced in the course of the narrative are very juvenile, as, for example, when Mr. Le Gallienne grumbles that "life is at least thirty years too long. Two score years is more than enough for us to say what we were sent here to say." If one says it in volumes of clotted bosh like *Young Lives*, the average man will probably think Mr. Le Gallienne's remark somewhat near the truth.

* * *

We were tempted to look at a book recently with the alluring title of *Our Lord's Illustrations*, half expecting to find some examples of the Blessed One's wood-carving, or a reproduction of the photograph he supplied to St. Veronica by simply blowing his nose in a handkerchief. But the subtitle cruelly disillusioned us. It was a book about "the metaphors, emblems, incidents, and allusions employed by Our Dear Carpenter to illustrate his teaching, classified and explained." Its scope is not, therefore, suited for the cultured readers of this high-class periodical. We have left that book for some Sunday-school teacher to purchase.

* * *

Blasphemous book-titles still multiply. The most recent are *The Arm of the Lord* and *The Gods Thought Otherwise*.

* * *

Christians are never weary of persecuting and defaming Freethinkers; but they do not want too much religion themselves. Pious ladies nowadays feel too tired to carry complete Church Services to a place of worship. As a consequence, very few complete copies are now published; but a small booklet, containing the Morning and Evening Prayers, the Communion Service, and a few others, meets with great favor. A few more years, and the worshippers will feel too tired even to carry that. Amen!

* * *

Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* is having a phenomenal sale in its sixpenny form. Our friends might help us and the cause by circulating Mr. Foote's rejoinder, *The Grand Old Book: A Reply to the Grand Old Man*. It is a pity the booksellers are too bigoted to exhibit the poison and the antidote on the same counters.

* * *

In the early autumn Messrs. Chatto & Windus will publish Swinburne's new drama, entitled *Rosamund*. We hear that it is more rapid and concentrated than any previous drama by this great poet.

Profane Jokes.

A CERTAIN Bishop, as he was going about his diocese, asked the porter of a lunatic asylum how the chaplain, whom he, the bishop, had lately appointed, was getting on. "Oh, my lord," said the man, "his preaching is most successful. The idiots henjoys it particklar!"

"Ephraim is as a cake unturned" was the text which a young minister used for his discourse the other Sunday. He proved that a cake unturned must be a cake half-baked, and then asked his congregation the sudden question: "Are you, my dear friends, half-baked?"

A Bishop of the Church of England was examining a candidate for Holy Orders who was more deficient in theology than brains. Among other questions, the Bishop asked him: "If you were in company with persons who impugned the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, how would you defend it?" "My lord, I feel hurt," the candidate replied, "by your supposing I keep such company." "But if you were to suddenly find yourself in the company of Unitarians, and they were to attack you, what course would you pursue?" "Can you doubt, my lord, what I should do? I should, of course, leave the room immediately!"

Mother—"You should not be frightened and run from the goat. Don't you know that you are a Christian Scientist?" Child—"But, mamma, the billy goat don't know it."

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 August.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, E. Pack.

BATTERSEA PARK (Public Meeting space): 3.30, Freethought Demonstration—Messrs. G. W. Foote, C. Cohen, A. B. Moss, W. Heaford.

BROCKWELL PARK (near Herne-hill Gates): 3.15 and 6, E. Pack.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, F. A. Davies.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Lectures every week evening at 8. Sunday, at 11.30, A lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, C. Cohen; 7, A lecture.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, R. P. Edwards.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, A. B. Moss.

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

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

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen.

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL (in the Horse Fair): 8, Mr. Keast.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): The hall will be closed during August.

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

PORTH BRANCH (Tonypany, 100 Primrose-street): 6, "Looking to Jesus." Also final arrangements for public lectures.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "Intellect and Religion." Also consideration of proposed excursion to Stratford-on-Avon.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—August 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 20, a., Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 10 Henstridge-place, Ordnance-road, St. John's Wood.—August 20, Battersea Park. 27, Mile End.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—August 20, Birmingham; 27, Derby. September 10, Glasgow.

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Having only ten minutes in which to catch the post, so that this message can get into the next issue, I am compelled to put it into the form of a letter, as that takes much less time than thinking out some fancy way of setting up type to draw attention. The Summer Season is practically over. I have a lot of stock left in suitings, which must be cleared. My heart aches to do it, but I am giving an offer that even the keenest bargain hunter cannot resist. Although the loss will be tremendous for me, I am going to make up all my GOOD CLOTHS which have been sold at from 45s. to 50s. at one uniform price to clear—27s. 6d. for Lounge Suit to measure, or 30s. for Shooting or Morning Suit to Measure, and Trousers 8s. 6d. Every garment will be cut to customers' special measures, well-trimmed, and made up smart and strong, and will be sent carriage paid. Stock includes Blacks, Blues, Browns, Fawns, and Greys in both checks and mixtures, smooth or rough cloths, so fill Self-Measurement form below, and state color you require, and when you get the Suit you will weep tears of joy. If you do not like the value I give you, I will return your money in full, and allow you to keep the Suit. (I challenge the world to test me on this point.)

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Yours very truly,

J. W. GOTT.

Self-Measurement Form.

Table with columns for COAT, TROUSERS, and VEST, each with sub-columns for Inches and specific measurements like Length of Waist, Round Waist over Trousers, etc.



Vertical text on the right edge of the page, partially cut off, including words like 'THER', 'very', 'religi', 'first', 'were)', 'own', 'of the', 'Greeks', 'compo', 'pagan', 'unders', 'tion.', 'the one', 'a matt', 'may tea', 'but in i', 'who en', 'as goo', 'want to', 'characte', 'people's', 'possible', 'a chang', 'factors', 'man. Y', 'a creed', 'off. I w', 'appear, E', 'principle.', 'must be r', 'their relig', 'tion the c', 'advance c', 'Of cou', 'plastic th', 'quickly th', 'its Cathol', 'fetishism.', 'pending a', 'useless ef', 'character.', 'exemplific', 'African S', 'excellent ap', 'was connec', '1899. M.', 'he says:—', 'Thou', 'commun', 'and unde', 'and a n', 'town for', 'thing to', 'within a', 'British P', 'There are th', 'the success', 'fetishism su', 'action of all', 'of spirits. T', 'well-administ', 'travel from c', 'both keep in', 'a continuous', 'Secondly, the', 'African wife,', 'companionship', 'No. 944-