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# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Vol. XX.—No. 9.

SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 1900.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## Good Lord!

PANCAKE DAY is a celebration dear to youngsters. They care little, and often know little, about the religious reason of this fixture. What occupies their minds, and later on their stomachs, is the dear old pancake, piping hot, nicely browned, done to a turn, with a pile of powdered sugar drenched in a flood of lemon juice. Even their elders have been known to smack their lips over this savory dish. All hail, then, to Shrove Tuesday! It is the true-blue orthodox Christian's last legitimate chance of a jollification for forty days. For the next day is the beginning of Lent, during which the devoted followers of Christ try, or make out, to imitate his holy example by swearing off as much food as possible, especially meat—although the Church is often willing to regard boiled mutton as fish for the sake of some exacting constitutions, belonging to invalids or to people with chequer-books and something solid behind them at the banker's. Of course it is not possible to imitate Jesus Christ very closely in anything. He went without food altogether for forty days. At least, they say so. But common flesh and blood cannot stand that. So it follows him a long way after—as it always does when it follows him at all. We may add, in passing, that Lent has really no more to do with the Carpenter of Nazareth than it has to do with the man in the moon. The word is Saxon, and means the Spring; the early Spring, when the days begin to lengthen, and the first buds break forth, and a fresh mildness is felt in the air, and dreams arise in us of the coming summer sunshine.

The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday. The ashes are supposed to remind the Christian of Adam's origin and his own ending. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust! But the real reason of the ashes is something different. Throughout the East—and it must never be forgotten that the Bible and Christianity come from that quarter—the use of ashes is part of the religious act of humiliation. Christians are expected on Ash Wednesday to humiliate themselves before God, to tell him (who knows it!) how wicked they are, to own up to all their sins, or as many as they can remember, and to ask his extra-special forgiveness.

This year it occurred to a number of well-known Christians that Ash Wednesday (Feb. 28) would be an excellent occasion for appealing to God about the trouble in South Africa. They did not exactly mention it, but they alluded to it pretty plainly. What else could they mean by "all the trouble and anxiety around us" just at present? Accordingly they issued a circular which we printed in last week's *Freethinker*, calling upon Christians of all denominations, except apparently Roman Catholics, to "observe" Ash Wednesday as "a day on which they will humble themselves before Him, and seek His teaching, and ask His Holy grace to do His holy will." (Here the printer of this journal rebels, and says he won't set up any more pronouns with capitals, if he dies for it.) This circular is a very ungrammatical production, and the names of its sponsors are as miscellaneous as its composition. There is the irreproachably correct Canon Gore, the high and mighty Viscount Halifax, the gay and festive Rev. W. Carlile of the Church Army, the grave and reverend Thomas Spurgeon of the famous Tabernacle, the easy and breezy Dr. Horton, with a lot of other Church and Dissenting clericals, and here and there an M.P., an admiral, or a colonel thrown in by way of diversity. It is not often

that all these gentlemen agree, and when they do agree their unanimity is wonderful.

This happy-family of humiliators "hear the call of the Lord to repentance." No doubt they have need of it. But that is a personal matter. What has it to do with us? Then they proceed to deplore, not their own sins, but the sins of "our nation," such as "drunkenness, gambling and covetousness, and pride." No doubt the clergy themselves are free from all these sins—especially pride. No doubt, too, the people of this nation are rather prone to drunkenness and gambling. But why all this pother about them just now? What particular relation do they bear to the "trouble and anxiety" of British reverses in South Africa? Is it really meant that God's way of calling our attention to them is disappointing General Buller three times in trying to relieve Ladysmith? And will God consider us a sober people when Ladysmith is relieved? The truth is, we fancy, that the clerical issuers of this circular saw in the "trouble and anxiety around us" a capital opportunity for business. Religion always has a better chance with us when we are down in the mouth. When our spirits rise we tell it to call to-morrow. For this reason we believe that the Ash Wednesday humiliation "fake" is doomed to failure. Has not the news arrived of Cronje's surrender? And is there any humiliation left in the average British Christian? He thinks less of the Lord now and more of "Bobs."

It is easy to see what is the real cause of the "anxiety" of these gentlemen. "Masses of our population," they say, "are departing from the living God." We should say that they are departing from the dead God. But we have no room at present to argue the point. Anyhow, we are pleased to hear these gentlemen's declaration. It shows that their trade is in danger. It also indicates a fresh hope for England. When the masses have abandoned God altogether, with all the mystifications of theology, they will take saner views of life and its duties. Instead of consulting priests and Bibles, they will form serious and independent judgments under the guidance of reason and experience. They will recognise that everything depends upon themselves, that they must be their own providence, and that the evils of this world should not be wept and prayed over, but combated with the weapons of science and fraternity.

We quite follow these gentlemen when they confess that the Church of God—meaning themselves and friends—displays "self-indulgence, worldliness, harsh judgment of others, dissensions, and disobedience to our Lord and his Word." But this is no new phenomenon. It was always thus. And it always will be so while the Church exists. Indeed it is likely to grow worse and worse, as the binding force of intellectual agreement is gone for ever.

"All servants of the Lord" were requested by these gentlemen to spend Ash Wednesday in seeking "a right way for us and for our nation." Well, the right way is always the way of reason and honor, and that can be found outside church better than within it. As for the "nation," we believe it has nothing to gain from the efforts, or the prayers, of these gentlemen. It is probable—we regard it as certain—that they are not seeking the nation's interest so much as their own. Priests have always displayed a keen professional instinct. They know when the iron is hot, and how to strike it; and many of us understand what they are after when they cry "Good Lord!"

G. W. FOOTE.

No. 971.

## Life and Mind.

NOTHING furnishes the human race with more prolific materials for constant reflection than what is known by the term "life and mind." And yet no other subject has been surrounded by more theological vagueness and metaphysical hair-splitting. There are mainly two theories entertained as to the origin and nature of life and mind. The one is that they are the products of nature, while the other alleges that they are the result of the exercise of supernatural power. Those who accept the latter theory are logically driven to ascribe the cause of all things to what has been termed a "miracle." Upon this point I intend to offer no explanation, for the simple reason that a "miracle" is outside of, or apart from, natural operations, and is, therefore, incapable of being submitted to any logical or rational test. The term, in an orthodox sense, implies an operation caused by some alleged supernatural being. But the very fact that such a being is beyond human ken induces me to remain silent as to his supposed power. As a Secularist, I refuse to dilate upon that about which I know nothing. Moreover, it appears to me that if the cause of any event is really *known*, it is unreasonable to regard such an event as a "miracle." Hence, we discover that the extension of knowledge destroys the belief in the supposed miraculous. I prefer, therefore, the belief that all that is has emanated from nature, which, in my opinion, has always existed, and always will exist.

The popular theological theory of the supernatural origin of life and mind is based upon the gratuitous assumption that natural agencies could not have produced either of these phenomena, and that, consequently, they must be ascribed to a supernatural cause. This is a sample of the old orthodox method of "explaining" one mystery by introducing a still greater one. It is said that the origination of life and mind has never been observed as having actually occurred through natural conditions. This is quite true, and it is equally true that their creation from what is called the supernatural has also never been seen. But supposing that both the theories of the Freethinker and the Christian were mere assumptions, the important question would then arise: Which is more in harmony with reason, and the result of the observation of scientific experiment—to attribute the origin of that which exists to a cause that is known, or to ascribe it to a source of which no knowledge obtains? No scientist would for a moment grant the logical soundness of the position that life and mind are beyond the powers inherent in nature, simply because he had not discovered the process by which the result had been achieved. He knows full well that the time was when various phenomena, now admitted as natural productions, were regarded as of supernatural origin; and therefore, relying upon the law of probability, he is quite prepared to admit that with the further advancement of experimental knowledge the productive power of nature may become still more apparent than it is at present.

One thing appears to me to be beyond all reasonable doubt, and that is, that scientific testimony up to date favors the hypothesis that what is termed "vital force" is not an outside entity acting upon living organisms, but a power inherent in nature itself. Professor F. S. Kingsley, of Tufts College, writes: "I know of no authority in recent years which recognises a distinct vital force. All students of nature, so far as I am aware, explain all the phenomena of life by means of physical and chemical forces." Professor E. L. Mark, of Harvard University, also states: "It has not occurred to me that anyone now uses the term 'vital force' in any other way than as a convenient method of expressing the sum-total of the physical and chemical activities of organisms." This accords with Haeckel's remark: "We can demonstrate the infinitely manifold and complicated physical and chemical properties of the albuminous bodies to be the real cause of organic or vital phenomena." To this emphatic testimony of America and Germany in favor of the natural origin of life and mind that of our own country may be added. For instance, Huxley says: "There is not a shadow of reason for believing that the physical changes of the globe, in past times, have been effected by other than

natural causes." Lange observes: "There is not the slightest reason for assuming that there is an agent outside the material world." Spencer writes: "It must suffice to enunciate the belief that life, under all its forms, has arisen by a progressive, unbroken evolution, and through the immediate instrumentality of what we call natural causes." And Tyndall frankly admits: "If you ask me whether there exists the least evidence to prove that any form of life can be developed out of matter, without demonstrable antecedent life, my reply is that evidence considered perfectly conclusive by many has been adduced.....We have the conception that all we see around us, and all we feel within us—the phenomena of physical nature as well as those of the human mind—have their unsearchable roots in a cosmical life." Thus it will be seen that modern scientists support the theory that the source from which life and mind were derived was natural. Can similar support be furnished on behalf of the theory of "the divine emanation of all things"? Certainly not, if my reading of modern literature has been accurate. I agree with Dr. Mivart that few persons now believe the Bible account of the creation of the world and the origin of the human race. The notion of supernatural agency is rapidly dying out, and the truth is being more fully recognised that nature is the great mother of all.

Personally, I regard life not as an entity imparted to the material organisation by some external power, but rather as a result of a process, which has taken place within the domain of nature herself. Upon this point much useful information may be acquired from a careful study of the process of evolution, which, no doubt, will ultimately be traced through all nature, as it has already been in organic life. Evolution has furnished the world with an explanation of so much that was before obscure that its value cannot be overrated. Not only the physical organs of humanity, but its highest mental powers, lie latent in the brains of inferior animals. Evolution, in fact, assumes, to use the words of Haeckel, "that in nature there is a great united, continuous, and everlasting process of development; and that all natural phenomena, without exception, from the motion of the celestial bodies and the fall of the rolling stone up to the growth of the plant and the consciousness of man, are subject to the same great law of causation; that they are to be ultimately reduced to atomic mechanics." It may, perhaps, be too much to assert that the entire process of evolution is reduced to mechanical law; but, if we substitute the term "physical" for "mechanical," the assertion, no doubt, would be correct. Many of the faculties of man were at one time supposed to be peculiar to him, and to be entirely absent, even in the lowest degree of development, from the inferior animals; but recent observation has shown the incorrectness of this view. Fear, love, joy, and other emotional states are seen not only in the animals nearest to man, but also in those much lower in intelligence. The religious faculty is still maintained by theologians to be an exception; but, apart from the question whether any such faculty really exists, religion, as generally understood, is a combination of fear, veneration, and dependence, all of which are to be met with in the lower animals. Darwin has clearly shown the power of the emotions in them, and the facts which he has quoted are far too strong and too numerous to be set aside.

The more I study the great problem of life and mind, the more deeply am I impressed with the belief that they are natural processes, having nothing whatever to do with the supposed supernatural. As in this article I have dealt principally with life, next week I will consider more fully the subject of mind. Within the last few years scientific discoveries have thrown considerable light upon the relation of mind to matter. Physiological psychology is now recognised as the highest and most certain form of mind study. The old methods of investigating mental operations are no longer looked upon as being of much value, and every person now who desires to investigate mind, whether in the inchoate form in which its manifestations are seen in the lower animals or in the highest developments that take place in human nature, proceeds along the line of what may be termed the somatic basis of thought, the brain and nervous system.

CHARLES WATTS.

## The Church and the Transvaal.

THE average religious mind, like Providence, moves in a mysterious way. Let the Christian observe that a certain series of historical developments assisted the growth and triumph of early Christianity, and he straightway dilates upon the "preparation in history for Christ," without recognising that there was no more a "preparation" for Christianity in the development of the Pagan world than there was a "preparation" for Napoleon I. in the preceding history of France, or that a volcanic eruption is the result of the conscious combination of the chemical and thermal forces that produce it. Or because there exists a definite relation between any given effect and its causes, it is argued that one was meant to produce the other, again failing to see that the argument would be equally true of any and every effect produced by any and every cause.

It is the same in social and political matters. Because a number of causes have contributed to make Great Britain a commanding world power, Providence (with a capital P) has clearly ordained that with her should rest the "mission" of carrying the light of civilisation into the dark places of the earth—always provided that such expeditions are consonant with our commercial prosperity. During the Soudan War the clergy were unanimous in the opinion that it was our "Providential mission" to civilise the Dervishes; and, when examined, the main reason for the belief was that, had it been otherwise, "Providence" would have given them better guns, and would have made them more successful in their warfare. It is curious, although it may be merely a coincidence, that our "mission" only extends to races that are weaker than ourselves; those who are strong enough to successfully resist our civilising impulses are allowed to civilise themselves or remain uncivilised, as they feel inclined.

In the case of the present South African war we have had all the usual nauseating religious cant about carrying out the will of God in crushing the Boer Republics, with a number of added features that could only rouse to laughter were it not that the terrible loss of life and the impetus given by the war to reactionary agencies makes laughter almost a crime. Both sides profess to believe in the same religion, worship the same God, and are equally sure he is fighting on their side. The Republics, whatever else they may be or may not be, are profoundly religious. Both President Steyn and President Kruger are liberal subscribers to the funds of the British and Foreign Bible Society. That Society has no less than fifty-four branches in the two States, and large consignments of New Testaments have been sent out to both Dutch and English during the campaign. The Boers, if we may trust press reports, spend a large portion of their time singing hymns, and the British soldiers, who must have changed mightily since Rudyard Kipling lived among them, are quite enthusiastic attendants at prayer-meetings, if such a veracious journal as the *Methodist Times* is to be believed.

What effect has all this religion had on the general course of the campaign? No one seriously pretends that the 150,000 Bibles sent out by the British and Foreign Bible Society have had the effect of either weakening or strengthening the fighting power of the armies engaged. Of course, we have had the usual yarn concerning someone who was saved by a Bible he was carrying intercepting a bullet, but there is every reason to believe that a pack of cards or Ruff's *Guide to the Turf* would have answered equally well. The picture of the British army solemnly engaged in reading the New Testament and munching a packet of chocolate is quite a touching one, only one's experience of armies at home hardly prepares one for such behavior.

And now to make the absurdity of the whole business still more grotesque, we have had a series of elaborate prayers officially issued by the bishops of the Established Church in order to remind God Almighty of the duty he owes to the British nation, and have heard much talk of a day of national humiliation in order to smooth the anger of God if the prayers be not sufficient. A day of prayer and humiliation for what? Because the followers of the Prince of Peace, those who are supplied with copies of a book telling them not to resist evil, to turn one cheek when the other is smitten, have not been able

to kill as many of the enemy as the bishops think ought to have been done. Not that anyone believes these prayers are worth anything. On the contrary, the very people who were clamoring for a day of prayer, were also clamoring for large reinforcements to be sent and blaming the home Government for not possessing guns of a heavier calibre. It is not to be expected that God Almighty would answer a prayer for victory unless those who prayed had some advantage in guns or men or position over those with whom they were fighting.

The archbishops and bishops appoint a day of prayer and humiliation owing to the want of success of the British Army! Is that the only thing, is it even the principal thing, that we have to feel humiliated over? A recent report to the London School Board showed that there were no less than 55,000 children out of a total of half a million who went to school day after day hungry. Think of it, all you followers of Christ who are yelping about the necessity of humiliation and the wrongs of Outlanders in the Transvaal. In the very heart of the Empire, the richest city in the world, the very centre from which we set forth to civilise other people, two out of every seventeen children in our public schools are reported as being insufficiently fed and, presumably, insufficiently clothed! Here is a greater cause for humiliation than would be furnished by our complete defeat on South African battlefields; yet we have had no talk of a special day of prayer and humiliation for this. These lawn-clad representatives of primitive savagery can see nothing anomalous in carrying civilisation to other peoples while at the very heart of our own civilisation there exist these and similar evils which threaten to bring it to ruin.

From other reports I learn that the number of families in London who live in single rooms reach the enormous total of 400,000 persons. When did the Churches interfere officially in this manner, and proclaim a day of national humiliation? Time after time during the present century we have witnessed the frenzied and desperate struggles of working men to gain a "living wage" from those who employ them. Never has the Church interfered officially. We have had compiled terrible statistics of crime, of misery, of destitution. We have witnessed, and are witnessing, the poorer classes being steadily ground down between the nether millstone of the ground landlord and the upper one of the house proprietor, and being driven in consequence to herd together under conditions that crush all the manhood and womanhood out of them; and the Church stands by unmoved, or accepts this state of affairs as part and parcel of the irrevocable decrees of Providence.

Yet here is cause for humiliation with a vengeance. The real cause for national humiliation is not that our army needs reorganisation, that our military leaders have been outgeneralled, or that our guns are out of date; the real cause of disgrace is that here in our midst we are in our blindness and stupidity perpetuating conditions that threaten to swamp all that is best in human nature. Whether it be the spirit of a "little Englander" or a "big Englander," I would far rather see the area of a London workman's living rooms expanded at home than see our Empire expanded abroad; far rather turn out clear thinking, clean living men and women in Great Britain than preach the gospel of Christian civilisation abroad with bayonet and Maxim gun. The men and women of Great Britain have a far deadlier enemy to fight in the ground landlord than in the Boer marksman. The latter may take the life of an individual, but the former is one of the agencies that preserve life only to crush it to lower and lower depths of degradation.

But none of these evils, widespread as they are and well known as they are, have ever called forth the concentrated energies of the clergy as the present war has done. The clergy are ready enough to demonstrate that the cause of civilisation is doomed if our campaign in the Transvaal ends disastrously; but that civilisation is threatened to an even greater extent by the breeding and rearing of thousands of children under existing condition, never seems to dawn upon what they are pleased to call their intelligence. Did the Church act as the real guardians of the people's interests, the real national welfare might receive more attention than it does, and the energies of people might be concentrated upon the essentials of individual well-being rather than allowed to run riot in a senseless scramble for objects

that, even when gained, are scarcely worth the trouble spent in securing them.

It is not as though there were any real conviction behind these prayers or professions of humiliation. There is not. They are only a return to stereotyped religious formulas under pressure of adverse circumstances. Had our army been successful from the first, we should have heard nothing of them. Talk of prayer and humiliation was in the air while the army was unsuccessful. When Lord Roberts makes a successful dash to the relief of Kimberley one hears it no longer. God Almighty is forgotten, and Roberts and Kitchener engross all attention. God Almighty *plus* Roberts and Kitchener is powerful: God Almighty *minus* the two Generals is useless, or worse than useless.

It is, however, only what might have been expected. The farce of praying to God for victory while sending out more men and more guns; the absurdity of professing belief in an all-wise, all-powerful, and all-living deity, and then advising him in our prayers how to act; the criminality of rousing the nation to frenzy over more or less imaginary wrongs abroad, and pouring out millions of pounds in their redress, while passing over the much greater wrongs of the people at home, is only in line with the past history of a creed which, while promising people complete happiness in the next world, has systematically deprived them of the means of enlightenment and enjoyment in this. C. COHEN.

### "Thy Will be Done."

THIS phrase, which is part of the Lord's Prayer, is a familiar expression used to denote resignation to the Divine judgment or caprice. To have due weight, it should be uttered with eyes turned upwards, disclosing as much of the whites as possible. Uplifted hands add something to the effect, and a kind of snivelling drawl is desirable as conducing to complete expressiveness. It is a silly utterance, as I propose to show; but it is employed very often by Christian believers, and will probably remain in vogue until the disappearance of the superstition of which it is part.

In the Law Courts there is a counterpart to this pious ejaculation, but the circumstances under which it is used are considerably different. After counsel has argued a point at more or less length; has brought all the precedents to bear that his legal experience, aided by the *Law Journal* reports, enables him to advance; has replied to incidental queries from his lordship; and at last has heard to his discomfiture a ruling against his contention, he puts the best face on a bad job, and, with the professional droop and smile, observes: "As your ludship pleases." That ends the incident. Now here there is just a possibility that counsel might have secured a ruling in his favor, and that, too, as the result of his argument. His "ludship" is not supposed to have made up his mind beforehand. He is presumed to sit there open to conviction, and liable to be swayed one way or another by the force or the weakness of that which is submitted. Therefore, the final observation, "Your ludship pleases," comes with a sufficiently good grace—especially if an early appeal is possible.

But "Thy will be done" can neither be followed by appeal nor preceded by argument. It is simply on a par with the "language" of the gentle punter, who sees the horse he has backed leisurely romp in last. It is an expression of utter helplessness or hopelessness, and, as such, might just as well be spared. Unlike counsel with a judge, you can't argue with Deity. At least, a common-sense Christian would not try. Dr. Parker, in his City Temple, has no hesitation in wrestling with the Lord—putting things pretty forcibly to him, and practically telling him what he ought to do, and the reason for doing it. Sometimes, lest the Lord should by chance be unacquainted with the exact circumstances of the situation, Dr. Parker, in his prayers, kindly informs him in detail of what has occurred, and how things precisely stand. Thus the great Parker often reminds us of the Scotch minister who, in his zeal for the welfare of missionaries, was moved to address heaven in the following manner: "We commend to Thy care those missionaries whose lives are in danger in the Fiji Islands—which Thou knowest are situated in the Pacific Ocean."

One can hardly suppose that the Lord, if there be one, takes any notice of Dr. Parker or others of that ilk. Their information and supplications are quite superfluous, as indeed must be the appeals of less immodest believers. There is no object in telling Omniscience our wants, or in attempting to change the Immutable. Still less is it necessary to exclaim "Thy will be done," seeing that the determination of the Eternal Omnipotent has been fixed before the beginning of the world, and there is nothing in existence strong enough to upset it. Naturally and inevitably, from the orthodox point of view, his will *will* be done, and the formula of submission goes without saying.

As long as it is said in real humility and with no inward rebellious feeling, the Lord may be content to hear it. By a stretch of imagination, one may even conceive him as being pleased to hear it. But, then, is "Thy will be done" always uttered in that acceptable spirit? Isn't it sometimes a question of not what the believer says, but the nasty way he says it? Does not the believer occasionally act as if he thought he could bluff the Almighty? Though his eyes are duly upturned and his voice modulated to a decorous nicety, he may still be inwardly afire with the fiercest rage, disappointment, grief, or disgust. With Jonah he may think, "I do well to be angry"; whilst the recollection of Job, as a vaunted example of patience, may serve but to add fuel to his wrath. Poor man, he need not be a hypocrite, though the result of his misplaced confidence shows him to have been far from wise. There is no use in the believer affecting resignation unless he feels it, and there is a great deal to be gained by his reviewing the situation, and considering whether he was really justified in expecting any supernatural interference on his behalf. Blessed are they that expect from Heaven—nothing, for they shall not be disappointed; at any rate, so far as that celestial quarter is concerned.

One way there is in which this formula of "Thy will be done" proves actually detrimental to the individual and to humanity at large. There is, first of all, the fact that no means exist for definitely ascertaining what is God's will, and next in this uncertainty some event or initial result—I am not talking now of death—may be taken as indicating his will, when later on it may be concluded that it was not his will after all. Thus effort may be checked incontinently, and inert resignation take the place of renewed endeavor. From this point of view, "Thy will be done" may be regarded as pre-eminently the motto of the laggard and the lackadaisical, the fatalist and the faint-hearted. Of one thing we may be sure: If there is a God, and he has a will in regard to mundane affairs, he cannot need our acquiescence in the methods by which he is pleased to carry it out. And then, even if it be admitted that there is some sort of comfort derivable in certain cases—as, for instance, bereavement by death—from the sentiment "Thy will be done," or its equivalents, "It can't be helped" or "It was to be," there is the danger that, in other cases of disappointment which have depended upon effort, it may dissipate hope and put a stop to possible rectification or achievement. FRANCIS NEALE.

### Superstition and Peace.

MR. W. T. STEAD is one of the most curious journalistic phenomena in Europe. No sooner does one conclude that he is just a clever newspaper man capturing, and making capital out of, the craze of the hour, than one is arrested by an exhibition of courage and majority-flouting that disturbs the previous conclusion. Mr. Stead, in his time, has played many parts, and some of the dead Steads must surely come up out of their graves from time to time to rebuke the living man. If, for instance, there is any one publicist more than another who is responsible for having watered and nurtured the Imperialist tree, of which the present war is one of the fruits, it is the editor of the *Review of Reviews*; and the present exponent and propagandist of peace has himself in his day done his share in helping to amass those armaments, the very existence of which is a permanent menace to peace. Whether a mind thus capable of cancelling every one of its activities, at one time or

another, and pursuing no settled or consistent course, is really to be dealt with very seriously is open to question.

Even on this South African question Mr. Stead's characteristic somersaults have been pronounced. At the period of the Raid Mr. Stead was an apologist for that exploit; he vigorously blew the Rhodes trumpet, and gaily told us with Christlike meekness that if you want to paint the map red you cannot help soiling your fingers. Indeed, an interesting episode of those days may serve as an admirable illustration of the religious mind; and, of course, Mr. Stead, whatever else he may be, is the embodiment of the religious mind.

Mr. Stead paid a more or less flying visit to Chicago, and came home and wrote a large pamphlet entitled *If Christ came to Chicago*. The thing was a great boom, the title (almost avowedly adapted from Lowell's poem) caught on, and we had varieties of it in every street—*If Christ came to Hoxton, If Christ came to the New Cut*, and so forth. Christ was reverently brought everywhere—though, on the priest's theory, being infinite, he was there already—and every little Bethel retailed the exciting narrative, colored by local matter. Every cleric undertook to expound what Christ would do in the cleric's shoes; and, though the exposition was not very edifying, Mr. Stead sold his pamphlet by the thousand.

Some time after the Jameson Raid, however, Olive Schreiner adopted much the same machinery as Mr. Stead's to frame an indictment of the Chartered Company's procedure towards the natives. It may be doubted whether *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland*, in its art apart from its ethics, was quite up to the level of Olive Schreiner's work, and its message might have been as well delivered in a more natural form. But, at least, Olive Schreiner is a woman of genius, untrammelled by convention, and capable of a passionate eloquence of great beauty and power; and her work naturally attracted attention alike by its method and its subject.

Some of us wondered how the journalistic inventor of the Christ formula for exposing social and political evils would deal with the rival Christ of Olive Schreiner. But Mr. Stead on that occasion passed by on the other side; one does not remember to have seen any serious notice of Olive Schreiner's book from his hands. Once more we had demonstrated, if demonstration were needed, the futility of the Christ formula.

At the present time, however, Mr. Stead has deserted his Rhodesian gods, and with him "painting the map red" is at a discount; in fact, he has thrown himself into the campaign against Rhodes and Chamberlain and the militarist spirit with an ardor which leaves nothing to be desired. Mr. Stead, indeed, can turn out printed matter over his own name at a rate that leaves all competitors leagues behind. Now the present writer, regarding militarism and expansionism as the synonyms for reaction in politics and ethics, desires to acknowledge Mr. Stead's vigor at the moment on the anti-militarist side; and, though, of course, no one can reasonably cherish the hope that he will not be blowing the other way to-morrow or next day. But for the time being, in his own fashion, he is doubtless doing an amount of educational work which is sorely needed, and circulating amongst the people facts as to the origin of the war which deserve to be known as widely as possible.

But in the course of this work he is playing religion for all it is worth, and to the rationalist lovers of peace the results are not encouraging. God is defeating the British armies for Mr. Chamberlain's shortcomings—that is the burden of the Stead philosophy. And the philosophy at times runs to imbecility. For instance, in a recent number of his journal, *War against War in South Africa*, there is elaborately printed a story about a British Hussar who was wounded at Dundee, seeing a vision of two Boer generals in white uniforms on white horses, carrying flags in their hands, and whom the best shot could not hit. On being told by a burger, "whose name was Rotha," that there were no such generals in the Boer army, the wounded Hussar replied, with an apparent scorn of common English grammar: "Then it must have been angels."\*

The tale, with its imitation of Biblical language, is calculated to impose on a baby. Yet Mr. Stead apparently sees no reason to doubt its accuracy, prints the absurdity prominently in large type, and garnishes it with quotations from Scripture and Macaulay. What are sane men and women to make out of tomfoolery of this kind? Indeed, if anyone wanted enlightenment as to the childishness of the religious theories, he could not do better than glance at some of the pronouncements of the theologians on the war. Thus, Mr. Price Hughes, who is a vigorous supporter of the war, which he regards as just, thought the British defeats were due to—what do you think? Why, to the refusal of the British Government to go to the assistance of the Armenians a year or two ago. That is to say, Mr. Hughes's god punishes the "sin" of British statesmen by allowing the Boers to kill inoffensive British soldiers, whilst the statesmen aforesaid go unharmed; and he permits the just side, as Mr. Hughes thinks, to receive checks in the Transvaal in order to avenge injustice in Armenia. What a futile, helpless humbug is Mr. Hughes's god! Why, if a man conducted himself after such a fashion, he would very soon find himself in jail.

As for Mr. Stead's God, he punishes Mr. Chamberlain's crime, as Mr. Stead thinks, by allowing Boers to slay and maim men who had no part in that crime—nay, many of whom, probably, would have condemned Mr. Chamberlain as much as Mr. Stead condemns him. Moreover, the Steadite God, believing the Boers to be in the right, can find no more simple or effective way of allowing justice to triumph on earth than by permitting the Boers to slaughter British soldiers, the while many Boers, themselves fighting for the right, are slaughtered in turn. One or two questions may be put to Mr. Stead which sum the matter up. If God regards this war as horrible and iniquitous, why did he not prevent it? Mr. Stead would have prevented it; and are we to understand that Mr. Stead's Christ, who can do so much more than Mr. Stead, after all actually does less? Is the disciple more just than the master? Surely the time is ripe for a new pamphlet, *If Mr. Stead came to Christ*. It would be interesting to read Mr. Stead's upbraiding of his "Lord" for his callous indifference to human suffering, and his inaction in presence of wrong.

But, in truth, it almost seems a trifle undignified to take to pieces the unreason and the nonsense of current religion. One constantly feels that the whole thing is so shallow, so short-sighted, that no man, who gives two minutes' consecutive thought to the matter, can be deceived by the clap-trap. Yet men are deceived, and solemnly repeat the clap-trap as profound wisdom—perhaps, in positing the capacity for two minutes' consecutive thought as general, one is over sanguine; it would certainly appear to be so.

On the immediate subject under discussion, however, as far as the campaign against militarism is concerned, let us fight the battle of reason with the weapons of reason, and leave the tricks of superstition to those who are fighting the battle of unreason. For Mr. Stead's tactics are really likely to do as much harm as service to the cause he has at present in hand. His work in the main must be to appeal to men's good feeling and good sense, to their justice and their magnanimity. He might reflect that to play on their fears of the "anger of God" by such nonsense as has been dealt with is rather to create hostility and suspicion towards his policy. Amongst people of the least observation progress through godliness cannot inspire much hope nowadays; indeed, one would have thought that that fallacy, at least, had been sufficiently exposed.

FREDERICK RYAN.

Sandy Hannah, who lived in Sorbie, was a curious creature, and a great hand for running after new preachers. One summer a new preacher was to preach in the parish kirk, and Alick, as usual, set off to hear him. On the road home he met Tam Johnston, and Tam asked him what kind o' a sermon the new minister gave them. "O, man, Tam, it was a powerfu' sermon, a splendid sermon, man; it wud 'a' made the hair rise on yer heid. He drave them in amang the brunstane reck like a drove o' now't, and claught them by the hair o' the heid, an' shook them ower the pit; an' after he had warmed the soles o' their feet a bit, he lat them gae, an' sent them home rejoicin'. O, man, Tam, ye hae missed a treat."

\* Mr. Stead, by the way, naively tells us that this story comes from Holland!

## Ten Centuries.

(From the Suppression of the School of Athens by Justinian to Galileo.)

A THOUSAND years the light of mind  
Illumined Athen's glorious porch;  
A thousand years, from sage to sage,  
Passed down undimmed the sacred torch;  
Till Rome decreed its light should cease,  
And darkened earth in quenching Greece.

Ten centuries the might of Rome,  
With more than a Medean law,  
Gripped the wide world, implacable,  
Holding the world of thought in awe;  
And persecution, blood, and tears  
Made record of a thousand years.

Her altars that to Jove ran red,  
Ran red to Jesus; though sufficed  
For Pagan rite the lamb and kid,  
Christians themselves made fuel for Christ;  
While Faith, in the Redeemer's name,  
Flared the red brand—fanned the red flame.

Nor Rome alone. Each Christian Church  
Proscribed alike; each Christian land  
Quenched every tenet save its own  
With persecution's iron hand.  
Calvin, for gentle Jesus' sake,  
Firmly as Mary reared the stake.

Could bonds and chains not stay the world  
Steadfast and fixed amid the spheres?  
Could screw and pincer not retain  
The credo of a thousand years?  
No. "Yet it moves"—nor wheel, nor rack,  
Nor faith can call that utt'rance back.

Aye, "still it moves." Though Truth was gagged,  
Her eyes dark bound 'neath Dogma's sway,  
Ere yet the "light of Galilee"  
To Galileo's light gave way;  
Thenceforth no longer, east or west,  
Might Faith with Knowledge march abreast.

O, when unto the after-day  
Science her morning tale shall tell  
How Ignorance bewitched the world  
Ere Galileo broke her spell;  
How Faith denounced all Science knew,  
Till Faith as firmly held it true;

How Learning crawled on Slavery's knees,  
Lest, with the finger of a fool,  
Custom might index to the mob  
The feet that walked 'gainst Dogma's rule;  
As prompt as Peter to deny  
The new Messiah with a lie;

How millions walking in the morn  
Saw not its ray, but in its light,  
Groping and purblind, wandered yet  
As in the darkness of the night;  
Science herself will haply deem  
Such memories but a twilight dream.

Not now the wheel, not now the rack,  
But yet intolerance wants not will,  
And aye the hand that bears the torch  
Shall find Light hath its martyrs still,  
But each such martyr more approves  
The Pisan's motto, "Yet it moves."

J. H. DELL.

"All who want to go to heaven," said the minister, "will please stand up." Apparently the whole congregation stood up. "Please sit down. All who don't want to go to heaven will now stand up." One man rose to his feet. Leaning forward, and pointing his finger at him, the pastor spoke in tones quivering with intense feeling: "Do you know, sir, that you have placed yourself in an attitude of defiance to the heavenly powers and have outraged the feelings of friends and neighbors who would be glad to regard you as a brother?" "Yes, sir," replied the man meekly. "I'll sit down if you will."

\* As is well known, Galileo, at the instance of the Inquisition, retracted his astronomical opinions on the revolution of the earth, but, notwithstanding his retraction, exclaimed *E pur se muove*—"Nevertheless it moves."

## Acid Drops.

SIR JOHN C. HOLDER, the biggest brewer in Birmingham, has defrayed the cost of printing "A War Sermon" on *England's Mission* by the Rev. A. G. Lloyd, of Edgbaston. This man of God believes that England is right in the present war. Well, he is entitled to his opinion; but why bring politics into church, where the worshippers are at least supposed to belong to all shades of political opinion? Not satisfied with doing this, the reverend gentleman mounts his war-horse and rides round the "sacred edifice." He declares that this war is "preparing the way for the extension of Christ's kingdom upon earth," besides enabling us to fulfil "our mission as a great nation of the world." Cant, sir, cant. And blasphemous cant too. Men may quarrel and fight, because they are human, fallible, ignorant, impatient, and ill-tempered. But to say that in doing so they are promoting the kingdom of Christ is to play into the hands of the "infidel," who often asserts that Christ told the truth when he said that he did not come to send peace, but a sword.

If this war is promoting Christ's kingdom on earth, as perhaps it is, the Rev. A. G. Lloyd, as a soldier of Christ, should go out to the front and take part in the fighting. What he suggests is that he does his share by stopping at home and praying. Indeed, he tells us that "Joshua fights and Moses prays, and both minister to the commonwealth of Israel." So the reverend gentleman plays his part as a little Moses, with Aaron and Hur to hold up his hands in the shape of a good regular salary and a casual brewer's cheque.

An anonymous idiot writes to the *Echo* pointing out that British successes began in South Africa after the appointment of a Day of Intercession. This writer forgets that the Boers have been praying all the time, and are praying still. They are far more pious and God-fearing than the British. And to suppose that God answers us, instead of them, in these circumstances, is a most absurd bit of patriotic vanity. The fact is, the Boers were bound to get the best of the fighting at first. The ground was of their own choosing, and they have a perfect genius for defensive warfare. But they were equally bound to get the worst of it when Britain put forth her military strength, with generals like Roberts and Kitchener in supreme command. God and prayer have nothing to do with the course of the campaign. It has been perfectly natural throughout.

Mr. Chamberlain's engagement with the Wesleyans is odd. The reason assigned is that the right honorable gentleman's speech in response to the toast of "The Houses of Parliament and the British Colonies" would, in the present state of affairs, have brought the function within the definition of a "political meeting," which is forbidden in all Wesleyan chapels and schools under the "model deed." It is a wonder that this difficulty was not perceived earlier. Many people will say now that the Methodist friends of the Boers have brought about this *dénouement* by their protests.

The old war-horse sniffs at the smell of powder. Pastor S. J. Baker, of Garland-street Baptist Church, Bury St. Edmund's, has asked for twelve months' leave of absence in order to rejoin his old regiment in Ireland for home defence. We hear that his action "was strongly deprecated" as most unbecoming on the part of a Christian minister. Perhaps it is so; but, after all, may not Mr. Baker be as well engaged in the "defence" of the country as in preaching old superstitions?

The Society of Friends, in an Address to their fellow Christians, feel bound to reiterate the conviction, which they have always held, that all war is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ. In a protest against compulsory military service, they appeal to their fellow-Christians to join with them in a strenuous resistance to the invasion of freedom of conscience involved in compulsory service, and urge them to use the high influence of the Church of Christ to check the spirit of military imperialism that finds favor to-day. The Society reissues the Address issued in 1854, just before the outbreak of the Crimean War, embodying the Friends' "profound conviction" against war.

The following letter, written from Modder River by one of the Highlanders who survived Magersfontein, describes what the writer considers the "cause of our failure." He says: "It was not because the Highland Brigade did not do their duty, or the firing of our horse artillery was defective, but because we desecrated the Lord's day by advancing to the attack on the Sabbath..... This is not only my opinion, but the opinion of many more; besides, there are a great many God-fearing men in their ranks, and that is why I say that

all our guns and men will be of no avail unless we call on the great God of all for help."

The Rev. W. H. Weekes, rector of Mafeking (formerly curate of St. Sidwell's Church, Exeter), has inadvertently "put his foot in it." He wrote home, and, after referring to the monotonous daily life of the beleaguered people, who had to rise early each morning, and get into the shell-proof trenches, for the purpose of avoiding the Boer missiles, which usually began to arrive about 5 a.m., Mr. Weekes said: "Sunday makes a welcome change; the Boers never fire on that day, and we are able to walk out as in peace times. Sunday is spent in rather a Continental manner, and enlivened with concerts and cricket and football matches. However, as it is the only day when the men can stretch their legs, this cannot be avoided, and is, indeed, necessary. Of course, I hold services as usual, but the congregations are not large."

Now, a writer in the *Christian Budget* asks whether leg stretching is a more important duty than Sabbath observance? or whether, in order to stretch their legs, it is "necessary" that our brave soldiers should spend the Lord's Day in a "Continental manner"?

How these Christians love one another. The Methodists have directed attention to an advertisement of a country rector for funds "to erect and furnish a room in an outlying district of his parish where Sunday afternoon services may be held to counteract the efforts of the Methodists to obtain access to our church people for purposes which it is scarcely necessary to characterise."

Mrs. Bridges Adams, at a recent meeting of the London School Board, moved the adoption of rules whereby the caretakers of the 205 schools let for Sunday purposes should not be kept on duty more than six days a week. The motion was rejected, though, when the discussion came on a little time ago as to letting the schools for Sunday lectures, a great deal of fuss was made as to the Sunday labor of the caretakers. "It doesn't matter," observes the *Clarion* ironically, "when it is a question of Sunday-schools."

Curate: Oh—er—by the way, Mr. Bloggs, I was wondering whether you would give me a small subscription for a most excellent object—I mean the repairing of the cemetery wall? Wealthy Parvenu: Not me, sir. That cemetery wall don't need any repairing. Them as is inside can't get out, an' them as is outside don't want to get in. Good mornin'. —*Punch*.

Where will the modern Sabbatarian restrictions end? It seems that we can't even get buried on Sunday now—at least, we can't at Southsea, where the authorities have prohibited Sunday funerals.

A boy named Henry Rix died at East Dereham, Norfolk, whilst kneeling by his bedside in the act of prayer.

There is a proposal to erect a gigantic statue of Jesus Christ in the Bay of Naples, which would be visible for miles around. It will have to be a purely fanciful representation of the Savior, for there is no positive proof that he ever lived, and it is certain that there is nothing to show what sort of a man he looked like.

The *Review of the Week* publishes the following "little fable" by Grant Allen: "The Chief Rabbi followed his host through the Castle with evident admiration. He was pleased with everything—the old oak roof, the Elizabethan furniture, the portraits of Georgian bishops in white lawn sleeves, the exquisite landscapes, the smooth sward of the lawn-tennis court. 'And your park?' he inquired, at last; 'how far does it extend?' The Archbishop waved his hand somewhat vaguely towards the horizon. 'To the top of that range of downs,' he answered, indicating it. 'Fallow deer!' the Chief Rabbi exclaimed. 'Yes,' the Archbishop replied, in an apologetic voice. 'My predecessor put them there, and.....we hardly like to disturb the pretty things without compensation.' The Chief Rabbi paused. Natural reticence held him back. But, after a struggle, he posed one final question. 'Might I venture to ask?' he inquired, 'er—how much is the value of your Grace's revenue?' 'Fifteen thousand a year,' the Archbishop said, smiling. The Chief Rabbi heaved a sigh. Then he murmured pensively, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'"

The Kingston Branch of the National Education Association, in a letter to the Burgesses, shows, says the *Christian World*, how little voluntaryism there is in the local so-called Voluntary schools. The total annual income, taking round numbers, according to the published accounts of the schools of Kingston, 1898-9, is £8,400. This amount is provided as follows, in round numbers: "Government Grants, out of the

taxpayers' pockets, £6,900; Payments made by parents, £437; Payments received from the public, hire of rooms, sale of needlework, etc., £143; Collections in Churches, Bazaars, etc., £256; Voluntary subscriptions, £660." The whole of this annual revenue of £8,400 is controlled by those who contribute but a portion of the £660 of Voluntary subscriptions.

Here is a chance for the prayers of the faithful. No fewer than six Bishops are now on the sick-list—namely, the Bishops of Liverpool, Ripon, Truro, Worcester, Newcastle, and Bangor.

The godly do not appear to be much safer than the impious in regard to the accidents of every-day life. The rector of Broughton, near Kettering, whilst visiting his stables, was kicked and killed by a horse.

The Bishop of Norwich believes that the reason why Boards of Guardians object to appoint chaplains is because "they want to get the services of the Church free, gratis, and for nothing." Well, they would be dear even at that price. The point, however, is that Nonconformists and non-religionists generally rightly object, as the *Christian World* puts it, to "be made to pay for the services of the clergy to Church people."

A warning to Sabbath-breakers. At Fareham, Bertie and John Harris, aged fourteen and fifteen respectively, were drowned whilst sliding on Sunday. Bertie was killed while trying to save his brother's life.

In view of the popular notion that Christ came to convert and save the world, it is interesting to learn that the number of Mohammedans has been estimated by a missionary living in Arabia at one hundred and ninety-six million five hundred thousand. Of these eighteen million are under the rule of the Turkish Government, twenty-three million are ruled by other Mussulman sovereigns, thirty-six million and a-half are subject to African princes, twenty million live in China, and ninety-nine million and a-half are under Christian rulers. Of these last about fifty-eight million belong to India and Beloochistan. The religion of the Arabian prophet extends from the North of China to the coast of Seirra Leone in Western Africa.

Mr. George Atkinson, farmer, of Chester Hill, Belford, Northumberland, called Mr. William Nightingale, revivalist preacher, of Dunstan Hill, a "viper" and a "scoundrel," and a "seducer." A libel action followed, and the jury gave a verdict for the defendant. The servant of the Lord has therefore to pay costs, without having vindicated his character.

Who is "G. D." of the *Morning Herald*, we wonder? He seems to be a personal friend of the Rev. J. M. Logan, of Bristol, who some years ago debated with Mr. Foote on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This writer more than hints that Mr. Foote was defeated in that discussion. But that is always claimed on behalf of the Christian disputant—by his friends. The real triumph of a Christian in such a discussion would be to convince some sceptics, or even one sceptic, that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead. Mr. Logan did not achieve such a victory. He convinced no one but those who were already convinced. On the other hand, some orthodox persons who heard the debate became Freethinkers afterwards, and joined the National Secular Society. We may add, also, that if Mr. Logan got so much the best of the debate it was wonderful that his supporters subjected Mr. Foote to such interruption.

"G. D." says that Mr. Logan was too "smart" for Mr. Foote. In one respect he was so. He frequently gave the "tip" to his disorderly followers in the meeting by means of grimaces and gestures. Mr. Foote has no desire to imitate that kind of smartness.

No doubt the debate did Mr. Logan a great deal of good. It gave him a fine advertisement, and he was on the spot to make the most of it. Moreover, it was a distinction in a minister of religion to be able and willing to debate at all. Generally speaking, the men of God are very wary of discussion. Most of them are quite incapable of engaging in it with any chance of success. Others know that their cause will necessarily suffer, however keen and eloquent they may be; for a debate is apt to set people thinking and investigating, and that is the death of religion.

There is something comical in the title of Pleasant Sunday Afternoons. It implies the perhaps unconscious avowal that the old orthodox Sunday afternoons were unpleasant. However, they catch on with a certain section of the public, and are being worked for all they are worth. But there are some opponents of this movement even in clerical circles. One of these is the Rev. W. Arthur Jones, of Battle. This gentleman recently preached a sermon against Secularism, with

which he coupled another object of his aversion. "It will be an evil day for England," he said, "if Secularism and Pleasant Sunday Afternoons are allowed to gain the predominance." This outburst brought a reply from the President of the local P. S. A., who complained of this wicked conjunction of two very different things. Altogether, it is a pretty quarrel as it stands, and we don't propose to spoil it.

Someone has sent us from Aberdeen a copy of "The Secularist's Decalogue." It is a Christian document, and is evidently meant to be satirical. We note that the tenth duty of a Secularist is to "try to make the Christian lose his temper." Well, it doesn't take much trying. If the Secularist's nine other duties are all as easy as the tenth, he is not likely to find his life a burden.

Dr. Clouston, superintendent of the Royal Asylum, Edinburgh, has been repeating the old Talmagean nonsense about unbelief and suicide. He is reported in the *Glasgow Herald* as saying that "It was his experience as a physician that a religious man of any kind was less apt to commit suicide than a non-religious man." Now we don't care a single straw about Dr. Clouston's "experience as a physician," for physicians, like other men, are prone to find facts that substantiate their prepossessions. The whole question is one of statistics, and statistics do not bear out Dr. Clouston's theory. Most clergymen will cite their "experience" in favor of the moral superiority of Christians over "infidels." But this is merely the voice of their professional prejudice. The statistics of crime show (if anything) the exact contrary.

Rev. J. S. Balmer, of Blackpool, speaking at Huddersfield, declared that the temperance movement "lives in the heart of God." Well, it didn't use to. They must have made a convert of the "One Above." In the Old Testament we read of "wine which cheereth God and man," and in the New Testament we read that God the Son's first miracle was the turning of whole barrels of water into wine to keep a spree going.

Ambrose Bierce has his own idea of that Kansas minister, author of *In His Steps*, who is to manage a daily paper for a week to show how Jesus Christ would do it. The humorist expresses himself thus:—

If, Sheldon, you show us  
How Christ, scorning self,  
Would edit a newspaper,  
That will be strange;  
But show us how Satan would carry himself  
If pulpit—nobody'll notice the change.

Pastor Novelist Sheldon will be on view in London a few months hence. He is announced as one of the speakers at the Christian Endeavor Convention to be held in July. There will be an opportunity of seeing whether the reverend gentleman bears any physical resemblance to Jesus Christ. Mentally and spiritually, as everyone knows, they are the spit of each other.

A Brooklyn barber, guilty of the crime of Sunday shaving, has got off by the ingenuity of his counsel. Jacob Strubel was fined five dollars for his crime, but he said he had not the money to pay. Mr. Frank Mann, the ingenious counsel aforesaid, pointed out to Justice Fitzgerald that the law said nothing about the alternative of imprisonment for the first offence, although it did in the case of the third; whereupon the prisoner was discharged.

Guided by inspiration, as he claims, Henry Lane, a Seventh-day Adventist, went into the house at Binghamton, New York, where the body of Augustus Chubbuck lay in a casket, and, "in a voice of thunder," quoted the words of Christ: "Young man, I say to thee, Arise." Chubbuck didn't rise, but the undertaker and his assistants did, and they carried out Lane, who fought furiously. Dane, apparently, believes that the dead were raised by Christ, and that his followers have the same power—a delusion that neither probability nor experience affords any excuse for entertaining.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

"Such funny anecdotes about Conversion are published in religious biographies that it would be easy for people with more humor than taste to invent amusing but apocryphal narratives." So says Mr. Andrew Lang in the *Westminster Gazette*, and we agree with him up to a point. What we doubt is whether any invented narratives, however humorous, could be more amusing than the serious ones already extant.

Mr. Lang says he was circularised by a certain person lately about his "favorite hymns." "I told him," he adds, "that the Homeric hymns were those from which I derived most improvement; but probably he did not publish this

response, never having heard, perhaps, of the hymns of Homer." This is Mr. Lang's playful way of rapping the knuckles of orthodox collectors of such unconsidered trifles.

What a ridiculous fuss the Irish members of parliament make about the Cromwell statue. Mr. Dillon admitted that, in his opinion, Cromwell was one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, of Englishmen. Surely that is quite enough to justify a public memorial. Great historic characters will and ought to be remembered. Whether everybody admires them from a debatable moral point of view is another matter altogether. There is hardly a figure in the national Valhalla against whom it would be impossible to raise serious objection on some ground or other; and, at this rate, we should never have any statues at all. No doubt the Irish will not ever love the memory of Cromwell; but, after all, there are a good many Englishmen in the United Kingdom. And why perpetuate old animosities? Instead of disputing over Cromwell, let us have statues of great Irishmen, even though they were "rebels."

The Rev. J. Stockwell Watts has collected no less than £90,000 for the sufferers by the "Liberator" smash. It is creditable that one man of God felt under an obligation to do his level best in this matter. Jabez Balfour and his swindling colleagues were very "pious" men, and their schemes were largely promoted by ministers of religion in every part of England.

Here is one of Bishop Walsham How's stories. A clergyman in Lancashire gave out as his text, "The Devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour," and then added, "The Bishop of Manchester has announced his intention of visiting all the parishes in his diocese, and hopes to visit this parish."

Another story is as follows:—At the church of Strathfield-saye, where the old Duke of Wellington was a regular attendant, a stranger was preaching, and when he ended the verger went up the stairs, opened the pulpit door a little way, slammed it to, and then opened it wide for the preacher to go out. The preacher asked the verger in the vestry why he had shut the door again while opening it, and the verger replied, "We always do that, sir, to wake the Duke."

"Reuter" reports that a long tube filled with gunpowder, and having a fuse attached, was found on Monday in the church of St. Joseph, Paris. The fuse had not been lighted. Hem! That's a trifle too thin. The article must have been left there by some friend of Holy Mother Church, probably a priest, who wanted to get up some extra sympathy with the establishment. It is an old trick, which has been played often—too often.

The news of the surrender of General Cronje and all his force to Lord Roberts brings the war—at least, we hope so—a decided step nearer to its termination. Cronje is clearly a brave, active, and astute commander; but he was in a hopeless position, and was bound to throw up the sponge unless he wanted to see his force annihilated. Britishers will all admire his courage and resourcefulness. He will, of course, be treated with respect as well as humanity.

What will Mr. Stead say now? He has been telling us that God was on the side of the Boers, and that England was bound to suffer defeat and humiliation. This may be true, but the Lord seems going a queer way to bring it to pass. Now as ever, to all appearance, God is on the side of the big battalions—when they are properly handled. Still, we dare say Mr. Stead will find some means of escape. To save his piety, and his own infallibility, he will perhaps discover that the Boers lost humility while the Lord was favoring them, and that he is now helping the other side. Piety and infallibility are never hard up for an excuse.

The Rev. W. Acraman, vicar of Crich, having been recently convicted of serious misdemeanors and sentenced to two years' imprisonment with hard labor, the Bishop of Southwell has formally deposed and degraded him from holy orders and declared the living vacant.

Of all tyrannies, superstition is the worst. When women free their minds of that, they will find the road clear to further freedom. The priests well know the influence and value of women in any cause in which their affections are engaged. When women come to see that their cause is the cause of Freethought, the Churches will cease to be built on their slavery, and the old fable of the fall through woman's transgression will be replaced by the fact of man's elevation through her virtues.—*J. M. Wheeler.*



Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 4, The Athenæum Hall, London, W.; 7.30.  
"Does God Govern the World?"

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 4, Dundee; 11, Huddersfield. April 8, Camberwell.—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.

We hear that some of the Freethought Publishing Company's publications are being reported as out of print. If any news-agent, or Branch secretary, has received such a report from any quarter, we beg him to communicate at once with the Company's secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, 377 Strand, London, W.C.—or to us, if he prefers that way.

T. WILMOT.—Mr. Foote has offered you a date by post. He regrets that he has been unable to visit Camberwell more frequently. Perhaps conditions will be more favorable in the not very distant future.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks always for your valued cuttings.

S. E. FRANKLIN.—It is not true that Mr. Foote said it was impossible for him ever to become a Christian. He was a Christian in his first childhood, and may be one again in his second childhood. Who knows what old age or a decayed brain might make him say? But how much would that help Christianity? Is there anything to boast of in converting a man when he is intellectually helpless? Is there room for pride over an imbecile proselyte?

S. HOLMAN.—See "Sugar Plums."

W. BEARDLEY.—You will see a paragraph concerning the Freethought Publishing Company in "Sugar Plums." The difficulty has been in obtaining premises. Many persons, even Freethinkers, would be astonished at the bigotry which still prevails.

N. S. S. REVEOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—A Gateshead Friend, 10s.; J. S. Neate, 10s. 6d.

J. TOMES.—Thanks. See paragraph.

INQUIRER.—The largest Freethought paper published in America is the *Truthseeker*, edited by Mr. Macdonald, at 28 Lafayette-place, New York City; the oldest is the *Boston Investigator*, edited by Mr. Washburn, at Paine Memorial Hall, Boston.

SEVERAL lecture notices arrived too late for insertion last week. We are weary of calling attention to this matter.

P. WILSON.—Thanks. In our next. Such things are always welcome.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—De Vrije Gedachte—People's Newspaper—Liberator—World's Advance—Thought (Oregon)—Truthseeker (New York)—Sydney Bulletin—Isle of Man Times—Ethical World—Punjab Observer—The Progressive Thinker—Glasgow Herald—Huddersfield Examiner—What is Right?—Boston Investigator—Two Worlds—Free Society—New Century—Crescent—Blue Grass Blade—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Public Opinion—Alnwick Guardian—Morning Herald—Newcastle Leader—Independent Pulpit—Torch of Reason—Open Court.

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.

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

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.

The right faith of man is not intended to give him repose, but to enable him to do his work. It is not that he should look away from the place he lives in now, and cheer himself with thoughts of the place he is to live in next, but that he should look stoutly into the world, in faith that if he does his work thoroughly here, some good to others or himself, with which, however, he is not at present concerned, will come of it hereafter. And this kind of brave, but not very hopeful or cheerful, faith I perceive to be always rewarded by clear practical success and splendid intellectual power; while the faith which dwells on the future fades away into rosy mist and emptiness of musical air.—*Ruskin*.

Sugar Plums.

THERE was a further improvement in the audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Churches' Call to England." Mr. Victor Roger made, of course, an efficient chairman. This evening (March 4) Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again. His subject will be, "Does God Govern the World?" Freethinkers should make this lecture known amongst their friends. It should be interesting in the present state of affairs.

The late Mr. William J. Birch, of Liverpool, who left the residue of his estate to the Secular Society, Limited, left also the following legacies to benevolent institutions: (1) Temporary Home for Lost and Starving Dogs (Liverpool Branch), £100; (2) Infirmary for Children, Myrtle-street, Liverpool, £100; (3) Liverpool Workshop for Outdoor Blind, Cornwallis-street, Liverpool, £100; (4) Bluecoat Hospital and School, School-lane, Liverpool, £100; (5) Orphan Boys' Asylum, Myrtle-street, Liverpool, £100; (6) Deaf and Dumb School, Oxford-street, Liverpool, £100; (7) Seaman's Orphanage, Newsham-park, Liverpool, £100; (8) Royal National Life Boat Institution (Liverpool Branch), £100; (9) Boys' Refuge and Night Asylum, St. Anne's street, Liverpool, £100; (10) Liverpool Food Association, Limekiln-lane, Liverpool, £100; (11) Newsboys' Home and Home for Friendless and Destitute Boys, Everton-road, Liverpool; (12) Benevolent Fund of the Liverpool Branch of the United Kingdom Commercial Travellers' Association, £100; (13) Commercial Travellers' Benevolent Institution, London, £100. What strikes one most in this list is the catholicity of Mr. Birch's benevolence. The twelfth and thirteenth legacies were natural enough, because Mr. Birch was a commercial traveller himself; but the other legacies show that he looked far and wide upon the necessities of his kind, and took pains to inform himself how he could best relieve them.

Mr. Birch's bequest to the Secular Society, Limited, has been realised. The amount is now at the Society's bankers'. How much it is, and other matters, will be stated and dealt with in next week's *Freethinker*, in the special communication which Mr. Foote has to make to the whole Freethought party.

The promised announcement as to the immediate future of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, has to be postponed till next week. Mr. Foote will have a good deal to say about this and other matters in our next issue; and, in some respects, it will be interesting reading.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Glasgow to large and very appreciative audiences. He was in good form, and his evening subject, "The Decay of Christianity," particularly "caught on." During the week Mr. Watts has been speaking in the surrounding districts of Glasgow, upon which he will report next week.

To-day, Sunday, March 4, Mr. Watts lectures, afternoon and evening, in Dundee, where he hopes to see the result of the renewed activity which has been recently going on there.

South-Wales Freethinkers should note that Mr. Cohen lectures at Pontypridd to-day (March 4) in "The Empire," and again on Monday evening in the Lesser Town Hall. Admission is free, with a collection towards expenses. On Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, in the same hall, Mr. Cohen debates the question of a Future Life with Mr. E. S. C. Mayo. A charge for admission is to be made at these meetings.

Mr. Charles Cattell, formerly of Birmingham, and now of "Emerson," Pokesdown, Hants, reached the age of seventy on Tuesday (Feb. 27). He has just published an essay on *Emerson and Modern Thought*. The price is twopence, and copies can be obtained of the author.

*Secular Thought* (Toronto) reproduces "Mimnermus's" article on "Byron's Religion" from our columns. We are glad to see that Editor Ellis is still able to keep his journal going, though we fear he has a hard task in doing so. It would be a great pity if Canada could not support one Freethought organ.

One good point about the Queen is that she never holds a candle to the Sabbatarians. On Sunday afternoon the East terrace at Windsor Castle was opened to the public, and a magnificent double military band played opposite her Majesty's apartments.

Recently we announced that Mr. W. W. Collins, an English

Secularist who went out to New Zealand some fourteen years ago, had recovered his old seat in the Parliament there. We now see from the last number of the *Liberator* to hand that Mr. Collins secured a record majority at Christchurch, polling 1,340 votes more than his leading opponent. As he made no secret of his Freethought, his friend, and ours, Mr. Joseph Symes, is prompted to say that "bigotry in Christchurch must be as dead as Jesus Christ himself."

We hope that Mr. Symes is by this time quite himself again. It will be remembered that he was assaulted, and very nearly killed, by a lurking ruffian, no doubt a bigot, who probably meant to kill him. Unfortunately, our old friend and colleague had to write as follows in the *Liberator* dated January 20: "I am far from well yet. This week I have been almost helpless; I hope for improvement, but clearly I must wait with what patience I may." Mr. Symes has been a hard worker, but a temperate liver in other respects, and, although he is getting too far on in years to stand unlimited knocking about, we trust that his unabused constitution will carry him successfully through this serious trouble.

The *Truthseeker* (New York) for February 17 was quite a Bruno number. Besides prose notices of the greatest of Freethought martyrs, it gave a portrait of him and several commemorative poems, by G. E. Macdonald, W. P. Ball, etc. One of these is a sonnet by G. W. Foote, which he had half forgotten. He wrote it in prison on a slate, for pen and paper were denied him, except once in three months when he was entitled to write a short letter to the outside world. Less as "poetry" than as a bit of "prison literature" we reproduce it in this week's *Freethinker*. It shows, at any rate, that Christian bigots and persecutors had not succeeded in "taming" the writer's spirit; and also that the thought of the noble and valiant dead has a sustaining power in the minds of the afflicted living.

### To the Church.

CHURCH of blood-glutted sword and axe,  
Mistress of robber, knave, and king,  
O'er torture-chambers, dungeons, racks,  
The mantle of oblivion fling!  
Hide your red past, nor raise the pall,  
Lest men your infamies recall.

The hands that wrought your crimes are dust,  
Your golden age of power recedes;  
But time nor distance, worm nor rust,  
Can blot the record of your deeds.  
Above your domes that touch the skies  
Your monuments of guilt arise.

Near where your evil course began  
Were Alexandria's stones dyed red,  
As wise Hypatia's life-tide ran,  
By Cyril's mob of monsters shed.  
Discarded Pity fled to beasts;  
Hate, to incarnate, chose your priests.

An outcast and a fugitive,  
Beyond your borders Science shrank,  
Or stayed on mouldering crust to live  
In Inquisition's dungeon dank;  
Save when, unleashed, your priestly pack  
Found joy in plying screw and rack.

If toward the past your mind be turned,  
On history's flaming pages look;  
Read of that Bruno whom ye burned,  
Then close and clasp the accusing book.  
Shut out the sight, bid darkness fall,  
Lest we recall—lest we recall.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

G. E. MACDONALD.

### Obituary.

I HAVE to report the death of Mrs. Ager, the good wife of an old Secularist residing in Matthias-road. She was esteemed and loved by all who knew her. The funeral took place at Finchley Cemetery on Monday afternoon. Austin Holyoake's burial service was read, and a brief address delivered by the undersigned.—JOHN FAGAN.

### A Surmise.

I have lain in dead men's beds, have walked  
The tombs of those with whom I'd talked,  
Called many a gone and goodly one to shape a sign,  
And panted for response. But none replies;  
No warnings loom, nor whisperings  
To open out any limitings,  
And Nescience mutely muses: When a man falls he lies.  
—*Thomas Hardy*.

### Shall I Slay my Brother Christian?

"SHALL I slay my brother Christian,  
Shall I slay my brother Boer?"  
God Almighty! What a question!  
Stead, your God delights in gore.

"Shall I snuff my brother's candle,  
Shall I douse the Dutchman's glim?"  
God—unless 'tis idle scandal—  
Slaughtered thousands—Follow Him.

Jahveh's chums—a choice selection,  
Rabid brutes, whose blood was "blue"—  
Acting under His direction,  
Hacked and gashed and slashed and slew.

Shall a sheep forsake its shepherd?  
Shall a savage Hottentot  
Change his color? Shall a leopard  
Ever change a single spot?

"Shall I slay my brother Christian,  
Shall my brother's blood be shed?"  
God of Battles! What a question!  
Ask another, Mr. Stead.

Christ, the Son of Jah the "gashing,"  
"Came to earth to bring a sword."  
What's a sword for but for slashing  
Human limbs and spinal cord?

"Hate your father and your mother,"  
Said the Savior, meek and mild;  
"Hate your sister and your brother,  
Hate your spouse and hate your child."

Hatred of a *blood relation*  
Takes you to the "radiant shores"—  
Why, then, Stead, this hesitation  
As to slaying *foreign* Boers?

Shall a Christian slay his brother?  
Yes, if Christians are such flats;  
Fight!—exterminate each other  
Like the famed Kilkenny cats!

ESS JAY BEE.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting, held at 377 Strand, W.C., on Thursday, February 22; the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. Present: Messrs. E. Bater, J. Cooper, T. Gorniot, W. Leat, A. B. Moss, J. Neate, C. Quinton, V. Roger, F. Schaller, E. E. Sims, T. Thurlow, C. Watts, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received and adopted.

Twelve new members were enrolled—from Birmingham Branch, 9; East London, 1; Parent Society, 2.

The President reported that the Secular Society, Limited, had granted the sum of £50 to the N. S. S., and a hearty vote of thanks to the Directors was moved by Mr. Bater, seconded by Mr. Leat, and carried unanimously.

Mr. E. E. Sims, on behalf of the West Ham Branch, then submitted the following resolution: "That, seeing that one of the avowed principles of the National Secular Society is the promotion of Peace, we respectfully beg the Executive to act on the precedent of February 23, 1881, and issue a circular to all Branches with a view to enlisting their sympathy on behalf of the Transvaal and the Free State Dutch, and suggesting a resolution to be passed calling upon the Government to at once take steps to stop the war and secure to the Boers their rightful independence."

The President pointed out that the present Constitution differed from that of 1881, and that the N. S. S., although in favor of the promotion of peace, was not a political body. Freethinkers belonged to all grades of society and all shades of opinion, and, if politics were introduced, the Society would split up every time a vote was taken. As President, it was his duty to see the Constitution respected, and he held that, this being a purely political resolution, it could not be discussed. He could not, and would not, however, object to a resolution in favor of Peace.

After some discussion, in which Messrs. Sims, Roger, Schaller, and Moss took part, Mr. Thurlow moved, and Mr. Moss seconded: "That this Executive of the National Secular Society deplors the present war between Great Britain and the two Dutch Republics, and urges the British Government to refer all matters in dispute between the belligerents in this conflict to arbitration, with a view to bringing about an honorable peace." Carried unanimously.

The printing accounts were ordered to be paid, and the date of the Society's Annual Excursion was fixed for Sunday, July 1.\*

The meeting then adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

\* Branch secretaries please note.

## The Rose-Garden of Persia.

"Who loves not woman, wine, and song,  
Remains a fool his whole life long."  
—MARTIN LUTHER.

PERSIA itself is an interesting country, and has had a past history of varied fortune. Owing to her geographical position, she may also have an historical future. Even now the diplomats of Europe are keeping sharp eyes on Persia and her politics. Poetry and politics are sufficiently remote, but the life of a people is as much concerned with the one as with the other. Whilst the diplomatic relations of Europe and Asia are of immediate interest to but a small circle, the poetry of an old-world Power may claim more general attention. The golden age of Persian poetry lasted five centuries (from the eleventh to the fifteenth), and includes such great poets as Rudagi, Firdausi, Sadi, Hafiz, Jalaluddui, and Omar Khayyam. Interest in Persian literature was never keen before the time of Fitzgerald. There are not many who have taken the trouble to ascertain for themselves that the pearls of translations are to be had for a small price. Omar is the best known to English readers. Seven hundred years after the astronomer-poet's death a manuscript of some of his incomparable quatrains came into the hands of an Englishman who was pleasing his scholarly leisure with the study of Persian. Edward Fitzgerald's magnificent verses have made the thoughts of Omar Khayyam a possession, for all time, of English speech. No translation in the world, except the subsidized translation of the Bible, has ever achieved such popularity.

But, among Persians, Hafiz is far and away the best-loved singer. In all lands where the beautiful Persian tongue is spoken he is loved and appreciated. Five hundred years after his death his verses are still chanted by the boatmen of the Ganges and discussed by the learned in Constantinople. They are copied in ornate manuscripts for the wealthy noblemen of Delhi, and lithographed for the poorer lovers of literature in Calcutta and Alexandria.

The poetry of Hafiz concerns itself, not only with praise of love and wine, but with speculations on religion; indeed, the same may be said of nearly all Persian poetry. Hafiz was an epicurean. The way he enforces his opinions is, of course, by praising wine—a deadly breach of orthodoxy, for remember he was a Persian and a Mohammedan. Hafiz has been called the Anacreon of Persia, and certainly some of his effusions bear out the comparison. He sometimes gives the priests a taste of his quality:—

Boy, let yon liquid ruby flow,  
And bid thy pensive heart be glad.  
Whate'er the frowning zealots say,  
Tell them their Eden cannot show  
A stream so clear as Ruknabad,  
A bower so sweet as Mosalay.

Hafiz was hardly a plaster-saint, otherwise the bat-eyed priests would not have demurred when asked to say prayers over his dead body.

These old Persian poets were very ironical gentlemen, if their mysticism is to be taken seriously. Jalaluddui, the greatest mystic poet of Persia, makes a lover exclaim to his mistress:—

With thee a prison would be a rose-garden,  
O thou ravisher of hearts! With thee Hell  
Would be a Paradise, O though cheerer of souls!

This is very pretty blasphemy indeed; and, let us hope, pleased the lover as much as it pained the priest.

Omar, after all, interests us most. He is the Voltaire of Persia. There is no doubt about his freethought and his materialism. He fails to find any Providence but Destiny, and any certain world but this, which he advises us to make the best of.

I came like water, and like wind I go  
Into this Universe, and why not knowing,  
Nor whence, like water willy-nilly flowing  
And out of it, as wind along the waste,  
I know not whither, willy-nilly blowing,  
What, without asking, hither hurried whence?  
And without asking, whither hurried hence?  
Oh, many a cup of this forbidden wine  
Must drown the memory of that insolence.

Across more than half a millennium of time and thousands of miles of space—across the far deeper abyss of thought and faith, of inheritance and aim, of art and language—the golden-mouthed Persian nightingales still sing to our ears. Under the witchery of their genius we scent, in our western winds, the aroma from the lovely Eastern gardens. We gaze on the brilliant colors of the roses, the perfect flame of the tulips. We taste the Persian wine, and wind our longing fingers in the tresses of the beloved.

Exclusiveness is a meaningless word in literature. The book-lover refuses to be constrained by any meaner bond than that of good writing. Poetry, like music, is wider than opinion, broader than dogma, as limitless as the humanity to which it appeals. When Gladstone passionately addressed his most magnificent speech on the "Oaths Bill" to the House of Commons, he quoted some perfect lines of that old Roman Freethinker, Lucretius, as daring an arraigner of "Providence" as Omar Khayyam himself. The majesty of the quotation was its justification. Gladstone's brain and taste persisted in being independent of his heart, like the German soldier who fought through the Franco-German war, and who, when killed, was found to have in his pocket a well-thumbed copy of De Musset's poems.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Doctor's Story.

MRS. ROGERS lay in her bed,  
Bandaged and blistered from foot to head,  
Bandaged and blistered from head to toe.  
Mrs. Rogers was very low,  
Bottle and saucers, spoon and cup  
On the table stood bravely up;  
Physic of high and low degree;  
Calomel, catnip, boneset tea—  
Everything a body could bear,  
Excepting light and water and air.

I opened the blinds; the day was bright,  
And God gave Mrs. Rogers some light.  
I opened the window; the day was fair,  
And God gave Mrs. Rogers some air.  
Bottles and blisters, powders and pills,  
Catnip, boneset, syrup and squills,  
Drugs and medicines, high and low,  
I threw them as far as I could throw.  
"What are you doing?" my patient cried;  
"Frightening Death," I coolly replied.  
"You are crazy!" a visitor said—  
I flung a bottle at her head.

Deacon Rogers he came to me;  
"Wife is comin' round," said he;  
"I re'lly think she'll worry through;  
She scolds me just as she used to do.  
All the people have poohed and slurred—  
And the neighbors have had their word;  
'Twas better to perish, some of 'em say,  
Than be cured in such an irregular way."  
"Your wife," said I, "had God's good care,  
And his remedies—light and water and air.  
All the doctors, beyond a doubt,  
Couldn't have cured Mrs. Rogers without."

The deacon smiled and bowed his head;  
"Then your bill is nothing," he said;  
"God's be the Glory, as you say;  
"God bless you, doctor, good day! good day!"

If ever I doctor that woman again,  
I'll give her medicine made by men.

—Medical World.

An American lady, who was in the Highlands shooting with her husband, attended the local kirk one Sunday morning, but left it with scandalous precipitation. For an hour the good minister had been fiercely raging at his benighted congregation, and wound up: "And pairhaps" (with pious cunning) "ye'll be thinkin', ye wairthless waistrels, that ye can daddle intae Paradise by clootchin' tae my coat-tails! Dinna be deceivit, for mark weel" (a pause of stern and holy joy), "when the trump of Gabriel sounds, I'll sneck them aff!"  
—Argonaut.

Georgia Colored Preacher—"We have a collection for foreign and domestic missions dis morning, bredren, and, for de glory ob heaben, which eber one ob you stole Widow Johnson's sheep don't put a cent on de plate!"

## Ingersoll the Man.

PHILOSOPHY AND POWERS OF CONCENTRATION.

(Concluded from page 125.)

ON July 4 of this year [1899] the Colonel, with a number of us around him, was watching a display of fireworks at his home. The danger from falling rocket sticks came up. I thoughtlessly remarked that the stick must come down with the same velocity it went up. "Oh, no," said he, "that is not so. However, I was turned out of school for saying that. The teacher said it would come down with the same velocity. I said no. The friction of the air would decrease the force. The teacher said that if I thought I knew more about it than he did I'd better leave the school. I thought I did, so I packed up my books and left."

His quickness in learning the contents of books and papers was something marvellous. I can best illustrate this power by giving a few examples. He made an appointment with some gentlemen, lawyers and others, who wished to retain him as counsel in one of the cases arising out of the Broadway cable road. They brought with them to his house a huge mass of papers, including a large volume of testimony. While they were all talking over the case, the Colonel was turning over the leaves of the testimony in an apparently careless manner. When his visitors rose to go they said they would leave this with him; he said he did not want it; he knew all about it. Naturally they were incredulous, and it was only when he challenged them to question him, and, on trial, they found he really could answer all they asked, that they became convinced.

One night, while at dinner, a manuscript volume was brought to him that the author wished him to criticise. During the dinner he rapidly turned over the pages, at the same time joining in the conversation. After we left the table I picked up the book and read the first thirty or forty pages, about a quarter of it perhaps. I repeated to him something I had read there. Imagine my surprise to find that he not only knew all that I had read, but all that was in the book. "When did you read it?" I asked. "Why, at dinner," he replied. His quickness, too, in grasping the salient points of a case was equally remarkable. For example, Colonel Ingersoll and a lawyer, who was, and is, one of the leaders of the New York bar, met at the office of a New York banker to consult about a complicated and important legal matter, in which the banker was interested. The matter was new to the Colonel. He listened for a while to the statement of the case, asked a number of questions, and then suddenly announced that he understood it all, and stated his opinion regarding it. This was followed by putting on his hat and walking out. The lawyer associated with him regarded him with surprise, and, when he had gone, said he could not pass on such a complicated and important matter in any such off-hand way. He must have time to study it. Yet when he did arrive at a conclusion he was obliged to agree with the Colonel in every particular. Stories of this kind regarding him might be multiplied indefinitely.

HE BELIEVED IN THE BENEFICENCE OF FREETHOUGHT.

I sincerely desire to avoid in this article all controversy as to Ingersoll's religious beliefs. I simply wish to show some of the traits of the man without reference to the truth or falsity of his teachings. But the question of religion entered so largely into his life that it is impossible not to refer to his mental attitude towards it. Outside of a handful of religious bigots no one questions his sincerity. But there is one criticism which is frequently advanced by religious but fair-minded people. They claim that, while he might believe all he said, yet he ought to have kept quiet, because a belief in the Christian religion has done, and is doing, great good in the world, promotes morality, and brings consolation to untold numbers of unfortunates by the promise of a better life to come; that in the hour of trial, in the darkness of bereavement, in the face of death itself, the firm believer finds in Christian doctrines his strength, his refuge, his solace. To take away that belief is a

cruel wrong, as it reduces him to utter despair. In estimating Colonel Ingersoll's character we are not concerned with the truth or falsity of these views. The question is, What did he think? Did he believe in preaching what he did he was bringing happiness or unhappiness? To one who knew the Colonel intimately there can be but one answer to this question. Strange as it may sound to the earnest Christian, he fully believed that the Christian religion had brought unhappiness, not happiness, had filled the world with rancor, hatred, and bigotry, had embittered life by its threats of future punishment; that nothing that was false could be a blessing—that men could be made free and happy only by knowing and recognising the truth. That he believed all this he proved by the most convincing of all evidence—by sacrificing money, ambition, and even safety, to this cause. So far as money was concerned, he could always make more by practising law than he could by his lectures. When he neglected his profession to "preach the gospel," it was always at a pecuniary loss. Again, if he had only stifled his conscience, and done what they criticise him for not doing, I doubt if there is a political office in the gift of the American people he could not have had. When a comparatively young man he was offered the Republican nomination for the governorship of Illinois—equivalent to an election—if he would only keep quiet on religion. This he refused to do. Instead, simply because he thought it was right, simply because he was a free man and wished to help to make others free, he chose a course which he knew would bring upon his head obloquy and hatred. He then and there said good-bye to political ambition for conscience' sake. Is that the course of a man who is actuated by anything but a high purpose? Then where bribes failed, so, too, did threats. After he fairly had started on his Agnostic career fanatics commenced to threaten his life. Many a time he mounted the platform with a letter in his pocket stating he would never live to finish his address. Nor were these threats to be despised. Nothing is so blind and cruel as religious fanaticism. The spirit that lighted the fire around Servetus, that deluged Paris with blood on St. Bartholomew's Day, that devastated Germany in the thirty years' war, that caused the unspeakable horrors of the Inquisition—something of that spirit still lingers to-day. More than one half-crazed brain would imagine that it was doing God's service by striking down this Antichrist, and that an eternity of bliss would open for it for performing such an act. While Colonel Ingersoll himself may have despised such threats, to his family they were a source of grave alarm.

AS PROTECTOR OF THE UNFORTUNATE.

Colonel Ingersoll preeminently had the faculty of inspiring confidence in the minds of those with whom he came in contact. One instinctively felt an absolute reliance on that strong, sympathetic nature. This was curiously exemplified in the case of the insane. He always maintained that this class of unfortunates were as susceptible to kindness as the sane. Also, he never contradicted them. The result was remarkable, sometimes inconvenient. When living in Peoria he secured the acquittal of a man charged with murder. His client had been, or subsequently became, subject to periodical fits of insanity. He lived some distance from Peoria, but whenever he felt one of these attacks coming on he at once started for that place, and on his arrival made a bee-line for the Colonel's house. If he arrived in the evening, he would patiently sit on the veranda all night. When the Colonel left the house in the morning he would follow him wherever he went. All day long he would dog the Colonel's footsteps, perfectly quiet and contented so long as he was at hand. But once let him lose track of the Colonel, and immediately he became terror-stricken and violent. This would be kept up until the immediate attack of insanity abated. Then back again he would go to his home, only to reappear at some later period. The secret of it all, of course, was his complete confidence that the Colonel could and would protect him from the fancied enemies called up by his diseased imagination.

A still more curious instance occurred on a Connecticut railroad. Though the car in which the Colonel was travelling was not more than half full, a stranger came

up to him and asked if he might sit with him. Receiving an affirmative reply, the unknown commenced pouring his confidences in the Colonel's ear. It was evident that he was insane, and that the fear of hell was the subject of his mania. He confided to the Colonel that he had escaped from an asylum, and was trying to avoid recapture. Strange juxtaposition! The poor victim of an imaginary wrath to come unknowingly seeking aid from the great Agnostic, whose principal life-work had been to drive that fear from the minds of all men.

#### HIS MARVELLOUS VERSATILITY.

The "Many-sided Franklin" is the title of a series of articles recently published. Certainly that appellation could be applied to Ingersoll. His gallantry as a soldier, his ability as a lawyer, as a political speaker, as a lecturer, are so well known as to require no comment. But the man who could thrill a vast audience by his eloquence, who could move them to enthusiasm, to laughter and tears, could also intelligently discuss evolution with a scientist, or teach an inventor mechanics. The man who could hold the attention and admiration of learned judges by his lucid exposition of the law could surprise professional musicians by his knowledge of their art. He was as familiar with Wagner or with Haeckel as with Kent or Blackstone. He could criticise a play or an actor with the same ability as he could a political platform. His knowledge of general literature was profound. Shakespeare was his constant study. Of him he said that he had reached the limit in dramatic literature. The human mind could go no farther. In one winter he made an address to lawyers, another to doctors, one on music to musicians, one before the Academy of Design, still another to actors, and many on religion to the world at large. Everything he undertook was well done. It mattered not whether he led a regiment to battle, or attacked superstition on the platform; whether he thundered against human slavery on the stump, or crushed injustice in the forum; in all he was admirable, in all he was foremost. Each profession claims him as her own. To the veteran of the civil war he is still the soldier; to the politician he is the man who almost made Blaine a President in 1876, and did so much towards making McKinley a President in 1896; to the lawyer he is the hero of a hundred noted legal fights; to the thinker he is the great Agnostic—to all he is the great wizard who kept our rugged English speech so enthralled that it worked his will abjectly and turned to music at his touch. It is too early yet to fairly judge Robert G. Ingersoll. We are too near to him. The dwellers on the lower slopes of some mighty mountain cannot distinguish its general character, cannot even appreciate its true greatness, as does the traveller who views it from afar. So is it to-day with him. There is yet too much passion and prejudice, too much hate and love, for a fair judgment. There are too many bigoted preachers who feared their churches would be emptied, too many fanatics whose holy of holies has been attacked; even many more liberal Christians as yet fail to see that his work has broadened the creeds, destroyed old fables, struck at the root of intolerance and bigotry—that the Churches themselves are freer, better, truer, because he has lived and taught.

As the years roll by, his grand character will loom up, more clearly marked against the sky-line. The noble proportions, the mental and moral grandeur, will be more fully appreciated. The slander of the bigot will be refuted, the rage of the fanatic will be stilled. The clouds of conflict will roll away from the minds of men, and the memory of the mighty dead will stand out clear and distinct in the bright sunshine.

CLARENCE S. BROWN.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

#### Ireland: An American View.

THAT the "Irish Joan of Arc" is on our shores;—

That her name is Maud Gonne;—

That she addressed a large crowd in New York last Sunday night;—

That she wants Ireland to strike for liberty whilst England's army is in South Africa;—

That she said to her Irish hearers, "If you are men having the freedom of Ireland at heart, now is your time";—

That no one enlisted;—

That Irishmen in America will never whip England;—

That there is bigger game and bigger boodle in their adopted land;—

That the Irish do not know their worst enemy, and never did—the Romish priest;—

That if Ireland wants freedom let her throw the Pope off of her back;—

That Leo XIII. is the man to get rid of, not John Bull;—

That Romanism is robbing the Irish here as well as in Ireland;—

That intelligent people long ago ceased to have any sympathy with Ireland and the Irish;—

That a man who will get up at six o'clock a.m. in the winter season to go to Mass will never be free;—

That superstition is the curse of Ireland;—

That the priest is the man to fight against.

—*Boston Investigator*.

#### Giordano Bruno.

O fiery-souled and daring-hearted lord  
Of all the martyrs of the whole wide world,  
Thou, by whose hands the banner was unfurled  
By priests and despots utterly abhorred,  
To which each true man consecrates his sword;  
Bruno, the flames that round thy body curled  
After thy taunt was at the tyrants hurled,  
Gleam through the years and make thy name adored.  
They could not fright thee with the Church's ban,  
Dungeon nor torture could thy spirit tame,  
Nor hell on earth wring from thee plaint or cry;  
No weeping woman or disciple came,  
None shared thy seven-years' Gethsemane—  
Alone thou stoodst against all men for man.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### Profane Jokes.

"I LEFT my husband's death notice here this morning," said the widow. "Yes," said the bright clerk in the publication room of the *Daily Squib*. "Now," continued the widow, "I want you to add to the notice, 'Gone to Rest,' in an appropriate place." "Yes, madam," replied the bright clerk, and the next morning she read: "Gone to rest in an appropriate place."

Sunday-School Superintendent (pointing a moral)—"Yes, scholars, the great thing is to know one's duty, and then do it. Admiral Dewey knew his duty when he entered Manila Bay and saw the Spanish ships, and the world has seen how nobly he performed it. Now, children, what is our duty in this bright holiday season? How may we emulate the great admiral? What should we do when we see about us the poor, the sick, and the suffering?" Small-boy Class (in concert): "Lick 'em!"—*Harper's Bazaar*.

Smith: "What made you stop going to church?" Jones: "Oh, I went out of business."

"Did Christ revenge himself upon his enemies?" was asked at a Sunday-school. "No; but he is going to," answered one of the most promising pupils.

"One of my ancestors," said the haughty Miss May Flowerstock, "was driven out of England for religious reasons." "Huh!" retorted the unassuming Miss Jones, "two of mine were driven out of the Garden of Eden for the same reason."

An old Scotch woman was famous for speaking kindly. No sheep was so dark but she could discover some white spot to point out to those who could see only its blackness. One day a gossiping neighbor lost patience with her and said, angrily: "Wumman, ye'll hae a gud word to say for the deevil himself!" Instantly came the reply, "Weel, he's a vera industreeous body."—*Chicago News*.

Sunday-school teacher: "What do we learn from the story of Samson?" Tommy (mournfully smoothing his ragged locks): "That it doesn't pay ter have women folks cut a feller's hair."—*Christian Advocate*.

"Jimmy and our preacher collided on their wheels." "Is Jimmy hurt?" "Yes; he heard what the preacher said."—*Chicago Record*.

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

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

## LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Does God Govern the World?"

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Conversazione.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, Special Business Meeting at the Bradlaugh Club.

NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Leighton Hall, Leighton-crescent, Kentish Town): 7, A lecture.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "Is Nature Moral?"

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Royal Palace Hotel, High-street, Kensington, W.): 11, Stanton Coit, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Secularism and War."

## COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): G. Tooth—11, "Education and Reform"; 7, "The South African War and its Effects on the Outlanders at Home."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday School; 7, John Robertson, "God in Politics."

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—Impromptu Speeches; 6.30, Children's Party.

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall, No. 2 Room): 7, G. E. C. Naewiger, "The Life of Buddha."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): Nineteenth Anniversary of the opening of the hall.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, A lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, Humorous and Dramatic Recital by H. B. Cooke.

PORTH BRANCH (The Empire, Pontypridd): C. Cohen—11, "Can we Follow Jesus?" 2.30, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?" 6, "Is there a God?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Sunday evening. Vocal and instrumental music, recitations, etc.

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

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—March 4, Pontypridd, South Wales.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.—March 11, Sheffield; 18, Birmingham. April 1, Glasgow; 8, Birmingham; 15, Stockton-on-Tees; 29, Birmingham.

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## "WHAT IS RELIGION?"

An Address delivered before the American Free Religious Association, at Boston, June 2, 1899.

Freethinkers should keep a copy of this Lecture always by them. It was Ingersoll's last utterance on the subject of religion. It shows him to have been a "rank Atheist" to the very end. Moreover, it is a summary of his life's teachings and embalms his ripest thought.

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