

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XX.—No. 46.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1900.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

Marie Corelli and Jesus Christ.

WE have no personal acquaintance with either of these celebrities; and, at least in that respect, we shall be able to speak of them both with absolute impartiality.

Marie Corelli is still living. Jesus Christ was long ago reported to be dead. She is a single lady, and he was a single gentleman. Nor is this the end of their resemblance. He was despised and rejected of men—and so is she. It is at once her boast and her lamentation; her boast, as displaying her own sublime merits; her lamentation, as exhibiting the world's folly and wickedness. Indeed, she looks abroad upon this wretched globe, and exclaims, "This is no place for me."

The living lady pretends to a very close acquaintance with the dead gentleman. She almost affects to be his proxy. If you want to know what he would say and do, if he were still on earth, you should inquire of her, and not of such uninspired persons as the Rev. C. M. Sheldon or Mr. Hall Caine. What *she* cannot tell you is really not worth knowing.

We have mentioned Mr. Hall Caine: and thereby hangs a tale. Mr. Caine belongs to the beautiful Isle of Man—and it *is* beautiful; the isle of lovely women and modest men; Mr. Caine's heroines being specimens of the one sex, and himself a specimen of the other. Mr. Caine is a Christian. How much of Christianity he believes is not apparent. Still, he is a Christian. He has written a novel called *The Christian*. Not a Christian, mark; but *the* Christian. Other samples are spurious. This is the real, original, unadulterated article. *The Christian* of Mr. Caine's novel is a mad parson, with the peaceful name of John, and the turbulent name of Storm. The John is a decent fellow, but the Storm is ripe for an asylum. He escapes it, however, by dying like a Christian—that is to say, he is beaten and kicked to death by a mob of (doubtless) professed Christians, who were once his admirers, but who turned upon him at the finish, as the Jews turned upon Jesus Christ after giving him a magnificent reception only a few days before, when he rode into Jerusalem on a brace of donkeys.

Wild and nonsensical as this novel was, it nevertheless hit a popular taste; for Christianity as a dogmatic religion is dead, and it only survives as a fashionable sentimentality. Mr. Caine's novel sold like hot muffins, and he netted a profit of several thousand pounds. It was not likely, therefore, that other novelists would neglect so remunerative a vein. "There's money in it" is a call to all adventurers; more certain and imperative than any call from the Holy Ghost. And out of the throng of aspirants there emerged the dauntless Marie Corelli. Mr. Caine had written *The Christian*. But she could do better than that. Accordingly she wrote *The Master Christian*. Beyond which it is difficult to see how anyone can go, unless somebody writes *The Mistress Christian*. This, of course, would

take the precedence, on the principle of *place aux dames*. For the present, however, Marie Corelli—whose real name, by the way, is something more prosaic—easily holds the field. Mr. Caine's hero was, after all, a disciple. Her hero, if we may speak so profanely, is the Master himself. Perhaps *The Mistress Christian*—the idea of which we cheerfully present to the lady novelists—should relate the career of a still more transcendent personage—namely, the Mother of God, the wonderful first woman in the world who was born without sin and shapen without iniquity. Of course there would be some risky episodes, but the lady novelists are equal to all these things.

Marie Corelli is reaping her reward for going one better than Hall Caine. Her publishers announce that the sale of the novel is unparalleled. There has never been anything at all like it. Scott, Byron, Thackeray, Dickens, and George Eliot are quite out of the running. It is Eclipse first, and the rest nowhere. Money is pouring into the lady's exchequer like a flood. And she is happy. She condescends to smile. She mitigates the severity of her gaze upon the male half of creation. She even patronises Shakespeare. Such is the mollifying influence of personal and financial success.

Hall Caine does not like this. It is not natural that he should. On the other hand, Marie Corelli does not like *him*. And this also is natural. They are rival exploiters of Jesus Christ. They trade with similar goods in the same market. It is not to be expected that any love should be lost between competitive hucksters. Hall Caine quarrelled with Wilson Barrett. Marie Corelli has quarrelled with Hall Caine. Who will be the next good Christian to quarrel with Marie Corelli?

We suspected that Marie Corelli would make a bold attempt on Mr. Caine's laurels—and emoluments. We had read—that is to say, we had turned over the pages of—her *Barabbas*, in which she presented the figure of Jesus Christ himself. She made him act and talk, from the Court of Pontius Pilate to the Garden of Gethsemane. The sun is said to have hidden its face at the sight of the crucified Redeemer, but Marie Corelli went on staring and chattering to the end of the chapter. There was no reason in the world, then, why she should not write a sort of continuation, and relate the adventures of Jesus Christ two thousand years later.

In *The Master Christian* the "Savior of the world"—which is still awaiting salvation—is introduced as a homeless, friendless boy named Manuel. The name was enough. When we read it we exclaimed, "There he is at last." We saw that Hall Caine was done for. This boy Manuel is a wonderful youth. He was bound, first of all, to be beautiful. In *Barabbas* the lady novelist had gloated over the physical perfections of Jesus Christ, particularly when he was stripped for the crucifixion. This was all right from the novelist's point of view. From the point of view of Christian history—or Christian tradition, whichever you please—it was absurd. In fulfilment of prophecy, if for no other

reason, the Prophet of Nazareth was represented as neither comely nor desirable. But that would never do for a nineteenth (or twentieth) century romance. Ladies, at any rate, insist on having the hero a noble specimen of manhood. They prefer a cross between Sandow and Apollo. Class distinctions do not count in this matter. The eternal feminine is in one respect homogeneous; and the heroes of the early novels of Ouida are a match for those of the cheap novels affected by servant girls, who like them tall, dark, and soldierly, and positively scorn a hero under six feet. High-class ladies go to palmists; low-class ladies go to fortune-tellers. In both cases the predictions are much alike. There is the promise of a swarthy, big husband, and twelve or fourteen fine, handsome children. And thus they fleet the time merrily as they did in the golden age.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

Progress of Secularism.

THE pains that are taken by many religious people to show that Secularism is a declining force in the country are astonishing. Laborious efforts are made in press and pulpit to prove that the impetus given to anti-Christian feeling by the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* and the growth of the general doctrine of evolution has now spent itself, and the public mind is once more returning to the old faith. One journal demonstrates, to its own satisfaction, that Materialism is now a discredited "doctrine" among scientific thinkers; another, that evolution is powerless to explain some of the more important problems of life; and yet a third, that the more prominent thinkers are turning to find in the "philosophy" of Christ's teachings the clue to most of the moral and social problems of to-day.

Now, these labored attempts to slay the slain are just a little bit suspicious. One might feel that there was more truth in these assertions if those who hold them were content to talk less concerning them. When people are convinced that a teaching is dead, they let it alone. No one wastes time in proving that the gods of Greece or Rome are dead; the fact is patent to all; and if those who talk so glibly about Secularism being an almost forgotten form of thought really believed what they say, we should not so often hear them saying it. As it is, their statements only betray their uneasiness. They feel, not that Secularism is dying out, but that it has settled down into a permanent mental condition of large numbers of people, and this in spite of all that misrepresentation and boycott could do to arrest it.

I do not know whether this is the time of the year devoted to sermons on Secularism or not, but several have reached me lately dealing with this subject, all of them professing to find indubitable proofs that it has lost all power in the country, and that even the working classes have come to see that it is Christianity alone that can furnish them with all they most need. One preacher concludes that the questions discussed by Secularists have no longer any interest for the mass of the people, who cannot for ever be content with "mere negations"; another, that Secularism has lost ground because it is attacking a form of faith that Christians have largely outgrown; another, that the Secular movement was never more than a personal following of Mr. Bradlaugh's, which rapidly dissolved after his death.

It would be treating such statements with far more consideration than they deserve were I to discuss their truthfulness—or lack of it—seriously, nor do I intend to spend any time in challenging the accuracy of statements that could only emanate from people who were without any real conception of the nature of Secular propaganda, or who, if they possessed such knowledge, carefully suppressed it. Such statements, trivial as they are in themselves, do, however, open up the question of the object and scope of Secularism, and it is always worth while drawing attention to that. A word may, perhaps, be fitly said on the question of Secularism being a bundle of "mere negations." Such statements are often made, and just as often they betray either ignorance or dishonesty. A teaching that is wholly

of a negative character never did and never will exist. Every teaching, in the very act of destroying, establishes. One cannot, for example, criticise the infallibility of the Bible without giving some information as to its real growth and nature. We cannot challenge and destroy the claims of Christianity in the field of social legislation without discussing the nature of social claims and indicating some method of satisfying them. And, on the reverse side, the more definite any teaching is, the more definite and precise are its negations. If those who talk about Secularism being "destructive" or purely negative could be brought to realise that whether a teaching is classed as constructive or destructive depends entirely upon whether we criticise it from the standpoint of the old or of the new—from what is or from what we would wish to be—such complaints would soon disappear.

But with regard to Secularism. Nearly all of those who criticise the growth of Secularism do so from an altogether wrong standpoint. Nothing could be more fallacious than to estimate the growth of Secularism by the number of avowed Secularists, or even by the number of local Secular organisations. That people, even non-Christians, do so is simply the result of their applying here the same judgment that served in Church matters. A Church with a number of definite doctrines to teach—doctrines that are accepted as the result of an act of faith rather than as the result of intellectual growth—naturally estimates its success by its membership. The one aim is to build up a strong Church. But with Secularism the case is vastly different. Here the essential point is not the gaining of members, but the propaganda of opinion. As I have pointed out more than once, I do not regard it as the mission of Secularism to build up a new Church with a slightly different ritual to those already existing. That is, after all, only cultivating the sectarian spirit in a new direction; and, whether I find this sectarian spirit manifested in connection with supernatural beliefs or Rationalist organisations, it is equally objectionable. I do not undervalue either organisation or membership. I recognise that both are vitally essential for the purpose of propaganda; but I insist that this is not the end of our work, only the means to an end.

The real end at which we are aiming is the establishment of a certain mental attitude—the submitting of all questions to the supreme test of their ability to minister to human happiness, with the exclusion of the supernatural from all departments of life. Consequently, the real question at issue is not the strength of Secular organisations—these must always fluctuate more or less—but the degree to which our propaganda has influenced public opinion. Tried by this test, I do not think that we have much cause for complaint. The National Secular Society is barely forty years of age; but, comparing the close of this period with the opening, I venture to say that hardly anywhere in history has the efforts of a handful of men and women ever been crowned with greater success. True, Christianity still lives, and is still able to present a powerful front to its enemies; but it is Christianity as represented in wealthy organisations rather than Christianity as a sincere conviction that has to be faced. If, as one preacher states, people have ceased to be "vitaly interested in many of the things which formed the staple of the oratory of Mrs. Besant and the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh"—even if we grant this to be true, it is only because the Churches have silently surrendered a great deal which they and others attacked as false. We may grant that it would be difficult to interest an educated audience nowadays by a lecture that had for its object the proving of the fallibility of the Bible, the absurdity of miracles, or the revolting nature of the doctrine of eternal damnation. We may grant this readily enough; but this is not because Secularism has grown weaker, or because it has failed in its mission, but because it has so far succeeded as to modify the opinions of even members of Christian Churches.

I am not foolish enough to claim that all the advance that has been made in the growth of Biblical knowledge, the revolt against the cruder and more uncivilised portions of the Christian faith, the rationalising of Sunday, and the growth of liberty of thought and speech, are all entirely due to the efforts of Secular propagandists. But I think we may safely claim that no

inconsiderable portion of the advance is due to their efforts. After all, what is the advanced thought of the Christian Churches but the minimum concessions they feel compelled to make to the rationalising spirit? Reforms never originate *within* the Churches, but always from without. Both Church and Chapel are engaged principally in trying to keep things as they are, and when they do more the credit is certainly not due to them, but to the active minority outside who are forcing them forward by moulding the public opinion to which they are compelled to appeal for support. As I write there lies before me the electoral address of the new Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, in which he warns his supporters that they must be prepared for great changes in their faith in the near future. It is only one more sign of the influence of the Secularism which we are assured is no more—a fresh sign of the influence of a propaganda which aims, and succeeds, in creating a mental atmosphere in which theological doctrines find it impossible to live.

I repeat, then, that it is but a poor test of the progress of Secularism to count either members or local organisations. In the nature of existing society the number of people who feel that they can come forward and boldly avow themselves Freethinkers must be small, and the fact that it is so reflects far more discredit upon the religious world, which makes honesty of thought and speech such an expensive luxury, than upon any others. Our work I conceive to be that of propagandists pure and simple—to create and mould opinion, not to build up churches or cultivate the sectarian spirit; and, so long as our organisations are strong enough to do this, we have all that we require.

To those who are able to take a comprehensive view of human evolution, who know what a slow, painful process the moulding of opinion is, the progress of Secularism will seem satisfactory enough. But, much as has been done, there is much more that remains to be accomplished. What Christianity fails to secure by an appeal to conviction it seeks to secure by an appeal to self-interest, and by the agency of elaborate organisation. It is against this that we have to fight, and it will be due to our own lack of energy and enterprise if, with the weapons of modern science and a more educated public as an audience, Christianity is not driven completely, as it is partly, outside the practical life of the nation.

C. COHEN.

Superstitious Persistency.

SINCE my articles upon Spiritualism appeared in these columns a few weeks since, over a dozen letters have reached me complaining more or less of my "severe" treatment of the subject. Some of these correspondents avow their inability to understand my position, others state that I have not proved my allegations, and one writer in particular is exceedingly emphatic in reminding me that I overlook the great comfort that Spiritualism affords its believers in the assurance it gives them that the wrongs, shortcomings, and injustice of this life are more than compensated for in an existence "beyond the grave." All my critics say I have not proved that spirits do not exist, and that there is no future life. But as to the last charge, it is not my business to attempt to prove a negative. It is the duty of those who make statements to prove their affirmations.

When dealing with what appears to me to be a superstition, it is necessary, in my opinion, to be as severe as possible in exposing error, providing the severity is confined to the error, and not employed towards the persons who entertain it. While granting the right of all persons to hold what views they may deem right, nothing should preclude the condemnation of such views if they are proved to be erroneous. Personally, I regard Spiritualism as an unmistakable error, and, therefore, to me it is a duty to expose it in a fair and courteous manner. I do not, however, write disrespectfully of Spiritualists as a body, for some may be honest and sincere in their belief. I am reminded that we do not know what matter is in its essence. Granted; but we do know what the term connotes, and we are familiar with the properties, powers, and movements of what is understood by that term. The same cannot be said of what is called spirit.

It is stated that I ignore the "facts" of metaphysics. But what are those "facts"? Metaphysics Professor De Morgan defines as being "the science to which ignorance goes to learn its knowledge, and knowledge to learn its ignorance. On which all men agree that it is the key, but no two upon how it is to be put into the lock" (Thomson's *Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 15). Karl Pearson, in his *Grammar of Science*, writes: "Now, one of the idiosyncrasies of metaphysicians lies in this: that each metaphysician has his own system, which, to a large extent, excludes that of his predecessors and colleagues. Hence, we must conclude that metaphysics are either built on air or on quicksands—either they start from no foundation in fact at all, or the superstructure has been raised before a basis has been found in the accurate classification of facts..... The metaphysician is a poet, often a very great one; but, unfortunately, he is not known to be a poet, because he clothes his poetry in the language of apparent reason, and hence it follows that he is liable to be a dangerous member of the community" (pp. 20, 21).

Briefly stated, my reasons for rejecting the belief in Spiritualism are as follows: (1) No one has hitherto defined what a spirit is; (2) it has not been proved that what is termed matter is incapable of producing all possible phenomena; (3) that wherever we find intelligence manifested it is always associated with a material organisation; (4) that consciousness depends upon functional activity which is called life, and that experience proves, when such activity ceases, all consciousness ends; (5) that, brain being necessary to thought, science has demonstrated that in the human organisation a diseased brain is followed by impaired thought, and that, without brain, thinking cannot take place; (6) that the personal testimony which has been given in favor of supposed spiritualistic manifestations is inconclusive, inasmuch as many of those who are said to have beheld the phenomena have been deceived as to the cause or causes of what they saw. This was the case even with such eminent scientists as Alfred Russel Wallace and Professor Crookes.

The following excerpt from Mr. B. F. Underwood's suggestive little work, *Spiritualism from a Materialistic Standpoint*, shows the fallacy of relying upon alleged communications from "the spirit world":—

"One spirit will tell you one thing, and another something diametrically opposite; and this in regard to matters of fact, and not merely concerning speculative points. For instance, it is still debated among Spiritualists and mediums whether there are brutes in the spirit world, because some spirits say yes, while others as positively say no. And yet we are on the very 'boundaries of another world,' and in daily conversation with its inhabitants..... Thousands of pretended spirits, claiming to be in many cases relatives and friends, say that all the animals of earth continue to exist, as individuals, after death, with dispositions and proclivities such as they possessed on earth—that they see them every day just as they see the spirits of their own race. Other thousands, just as intelligent, and apparently with equal sincerity, say that there are no brutes in the spirit world. Some of our pretended invisible friends and teachers tell us that, animals losing their identity at death, their spirits are resolved into 'elementary primates,' and afford food for the spirits of human beings. Other spirits solemnly declare 'through the mediums' that no food is used or needed in that invisible world. I once heard a distinguished trance speaker say that the relation of the sexes is continued after death; that human beings are there begotten, and ushered into existence, and pass through the stages of infancy, childhood, adolescence, and manhood and womanhood, as they do here. Other communications—one from Socrates, and another from Lord Bacon, among the many—assure me that the notion of births in the world of spirits is false, and must have come from some lying, mischievous spirits. Appealing to men and women of common sense, I ask: Is it not evident that these utterances and messages about the land of spirits are simply the vagaries of the mediums' own brains?" (pp. 12, 13).

A prominent error with Spiritualists is in confounding belief with knowledge. There is a marked difference between the two. It is quite true we may, and do, have faith in that of which we have no real or actual knowledge, for we are compelled to exercise such faith in every-day life upon numerous topics. The point to be remembered is that, if we are judicial or rational, we

shall be careful that our belief is not opposed to knowledge. A man states that he has seen what he terms spiritualistic manifestations, and he brings a dozen persons to verify his statement. What are we to think in such a case? A moment's reflection may show that the testimony as to what occurred is unimpeachable, while the conclusion as to its cause is perfectly erroneous. The event which he describes may have happened, but how is it to be proved that it was caused by spirits? The forces in operation in its production may be to him unknown, still his evidence could simply vouch for the phenomenon; and the cause must be a matter for inquiry. No sensible person will deny that it is possible we may be unable to explain the cause of many phenomena we see, but that does not justify Spiritualists in assuming that their explanation is the true one. My objection to Spiritualism is that its assumptions have no foundation in fact. Its entire basis rests upon imagination and uncontrolled emotion. If, in their attempt to explain certain mysteries, Spiritualists adopt a method opposed to science and our present knowledge of natural law, we are perfectly justified in asking upon what grounds they do so.

I have been asked to answer the following questions: "Is mind higher than matter, and does it not control matter?" "If the organisation of brain be the cause of mind, is the organisation of the brain less complete in an elephant than it is in man?" I answer that mind is not higher than, but a part of, matter, and that its manifestations are unknown where matter is not. Mind does not always control matter, as in cases of epilepsy, paralysis, and intoxication. *Per se*, the organisation of the brain in an elephant is as complete as in man, but the structure is different. Haeckel, in his *History of Creation*, writes: "Between the most highly-developed animal souls and the lowest-developed human souls there exists only a small quantitative, but no qualitative, difference; and this difference is much less than the difference between the lowest and the highest human souls, or than the difference between the lowest and the highest animal souls" (vol. ii., p. 362). The following, from Edward Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*, has also a bearing upon the question: "The science of Comparative Psychology declares that the evidence of his [man's] immortality is neither stronger nor weaker than the evidence of the immortality of the lower animals" (p. 35).

Recognising the fact that from the time when life first appeared on this globe until now progress appears to have been the order of nature, Spiritualists urge it is reasonable to suppose that the same law will continue its operations in some future world. This is another groundless assumption. How, in the name of common sense, can it be proved that because progress goes on in the material world, about the existence of which there can be no doubt, similar progress will be continued in a world of which we know nothing? It is thoroughly absurd to assert that a future existence in a spirit world is proved by the fact that development has been always taking place in the organic kingdom. First came animals low in the scale, then of higher and higher type, and so on up to man. Why, then, it is asked, may not man pass at death into a still higher condition? Now the merest tyro in logic can recognise that there is no analogy whatever in the two cases. The higher animals are not the lower in another stage, but an improvement upon them, a new individuality. The only argument that could logically be drawn from the development theory on this point is that, after man, beings of a still higher order might make their appearance, but then they would no more be individual men of a previous age than we are the Iguanodons of the "age of reptiles." Besides, all the changes that we know of in the organic kingdom have taken place upon the earth, whereas the condition which believers in a future life contend for is to be in some far-off land of shadows occupied by what are termed "disembodied spirits."

Equally fallacious is it to allege that "eternal justice" demands that the wrongs and inequalities of this life should be compensated for in some future state of existence. Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his *Science of Ethics*, says: "Justice, in a sense, means reasonableness." But is it reasonable to suppose that injustice here will be followed by justice hereafter? Upon what grounds does such a notion rest? Moreover, does not

the fact that injustice obtains here destroy the theory of "eternal justice"? Further, *why* should we have to suffer wrong here which is to be compensated for in some other life? Is it not more reasonable to believe that the evils endured on earth are largely the result of man's own ignorance, indifference, and false conceptions of the duties of life? Some Spiritualists contend that, in accordance with the law of "fitness of things," each person reaps what he has sown, and therefore, if there is no opportunity for such reaping here, an opportunity will be given for the operation hereafter. This is pure conjecture. Besides, it is not strictly accurate to allege that always "each reaps exactly as he has sown." This theory does not accord with the law of heredity and that of cause and effect. For instance, an individual may be sober, chaste, and honorable in the morning of his life, and yet subsequently be broken down physically and morally, and that not from his own fault, but in consequence of the wrong-doing of his parents prior to his birth. And yet those very parents themselves might never have experienced any serious effects through their own bad actions.

CHARLES WATTS.

Lord Byron and the Lady.

For me I know nought; nothing I deny,
Admit, reject, contemn; and what know you,
Except, perhaps, that you were born to die!

AN interesting letter by Lord Byron has recently been discovered. It has reference to the prayer of a lady on his behalf, and seems now to be published in order to show that the poet was not entirely devoid of religious belief. The prayer and the letter from Lord Byron appear in a religious journal, which grudgingly admits that some of Byron's poems are "no doubt exceptional in power and beauty." But, it adds, many of them "could only sadden the Christian reader"—which is probably the best recommendation to young people to read Lord Byron's poems, if they have not already done so.

Dean Howell, of St. David's, appears to have sent the letters to the press. The religious journal in which they are published is good enough to say that they "indicate in a startling way the right course of Christian action in intercourse with those who doubt or disbelieve." It seems that in 1819 the wife of a Mr. John Shepherd, of Frome, died and left amongst her papers a prayer which her husband believed to have been composed on behalf of the poet. The husband, with rather questionable taste, forwarded the prayer to Lord Byron. The terms of his letter to the poet are rather curious. The epistle is dated November 21, 1821, and is addressed from Frome, Somerset, to the Rt. Hon. Lord Byron, Pisa. The writer says: "More than two years since a lovely and beloved wife was taken from me by lingering disease after a very short union. She possessed unvarying gentleness and fortitude, and a piety so retiring as rarely to disclose itself in words." Then the writer goes on to say that, since the second anniversary of her decease, he had read some papers which no one had seen during her life, and which contained her most secret thoughts. Amongst them he found the prayer which, he says, "there is no doubt refers to your lordship"—though, from all it contains, it might have had reference to other distinguished men of the time. Here is a portion of the prayer:—

"Oh, my God, I take encouragement from the assurance of Thy word, to pray to Thee on behalf of one for whom I have lately been much interested. May the person to whom I allude (and who is now, we fear, as much distinguished for his neglect of Thee as for the transcendent talents Thou hast bestowed on him) be awakened to a sense of his own danger, and led to seek that peace of mind in a proper sense of religion which he has found this world's enjoyments unable to procure. Do Thou grant that his future example may be productive of far more extensive benefit than his past conduct and writings have been of evil, and may the sun of righteousness, which, we trust, will at some future period arise on him, be bright in proportion to the darkness of those clouds which guilt has raised, and soothing in proportion to the keenness of that agony which the punishment of his vices has inflicted on him."

The very officious husband, after inflicting the above and much more on Lord Byron, whom he takes upon himself to address, admits that there is nothing which, in a literary sense, could interest his lordship. There is something, however, in the concluding sentence of the prayer which no man, having the least regard for himself or for others, would have forwarded in the way described. Byron had many failings as well as surpassing abilities, but it does seem a little unfair to make a prayer to the Almighty the vehicle for condemning a man's real or supposed sins. Most people will agree that it was absolutely indecent to resurrect such a prayer from private papers and forward it to Lord Byron.

Byron, no doubt, felt like kicking the husband for his impertinence, but restrained himself from a regard for the lady. After all, it is something to be prayed for, especially by a young and beautiful woman, though the petitions are in all probability addressed to thin air.

With great gallantry, almost to the point of sacrificing principle, Lord Byron replied to Mr. Shepherd in regard to his wife's prayer. (It is worth while noticing that the Being to whom the prayer is addressed does not figure in the matter at all—scarcely as much as a lay figure in an artist's studio.) Byron says, naturally enough, that the extract affected him, because it would imply a want of all feeling to have read it with indifference. He says, as might have been expected, that he is not quite sure that it was intended for him. At the same time, he admits it might have been so intended. Byron was no hypocrite; no whited sepulchre. All his sins were on the surface. He was honest or compliant enough to accept the implications in the lady's prayer. He says:—

"But, for whomsoever it was meant, I have read it with all the pleasure which can arise from so melancholy a topic. I say pleasure, because your brief and simple picture of the life and demeanor of the excellent person whom, I trust, you will again meet, cannot be contemplated without the admiration due to her virtues and her pure and unpretending piety.....A man's creed does not depend upon himself. Who can say, 'I will believe this, that, or the other,' and, least of all, that which he least can understand? I have, however, observed that those who have begun life with extreme faith have, in the end, greatly narrowed it, as Chillingworth, Clarke (who ended as an Arian), and some others."

Later in his letter, of which the above is only a summary, Lord Byron asks his correspondent to do him the justice to suppose that *video meliora proboque*, however the *Deteriora sequor* may have been applied to his conduct.

So much for the correspondence. The comments previously alluded to scarcely deserve attention. They seem to suggest that Byron was a Christian, whom—with all his recorded, perhaps exaggerated, faults—the Church is entitled to claim. But, of course, the author of "The Prayer of Nature" was no Christian. In his own words:—

Let bigots rear a gloomy fane,
Let superstition hail the pile,
Let priests still spread their sable reign,
With tales of mystic rites beguile.

But, in spite of all their charming, Byron never belonged to them. At school, at Harrow, he was accused of Atheism. Scepticism runs through nearly all his finest productions. He was never an Atheist as Shelley was. Sometimes he professed—mostly in a poetic fashion, and with poetic license—an approval of some theological ideas; but any expressions of that kind were nearly always corrected by an extra dose of Attic salt.

Leigh Hunt said of him: "He was a Christian by education; he was infidel by reading. He was a Christian by habit; he was no Christian upon reflection." That is a curious way of describing him, it is true; but if the description does not apply to him, it does to a considerable number of present-day folks.

FRANCIS NEALE.

Nature acts with fearful uniformity. Stern as fate, absolute as tyranny, remorseless as death, it has no ear for prayer, no heart for sympathy, no arm to save.—G. J. Holyoake.

Mr. G. W. Foote on Death.

MANY people plodded through the wet streets to the Leicester Secular Hall last Sunday evening, to hear Mr. G. W. Foote, the President of the National Secular Society, on the theme of "Does Death End Us?" Tennyson, the lecturer observed, had described death as a "Shadow clothed in black, that holds the keys of all the creeds." All the religions of the world made promises with respect to the existence after death, but we must all die ere we could test the truth of these promises. Priests had always made use of men's fears. "Yet," declared Mr. Foote, "I deny that man has naturally any fear of death as such." The raw levies of the first French Republic, ill-fed and ill-clad as they were, hurled back the trained armies of the monarchs of Europe, and risked their lives with gay jests on their lips and the cry of liberty, equality, and fraternity as their war-cry. What men feared was not death, but the means that led to it—typhoid fever, smallpox, wounds; in short, they feared suffering. We instinctively avoided pain until we were swayed by some stronger motive, such as duty, love, or friendship. To speak of the "death agony" was to utter a paradox. Pain is the recoil of the nerves against assault or disease. As the strength diminished the recoil diminished, and the dying retained little capacity for pain. What the dying needed was peace and quiet, with the sight of beloved faces and the sound of beloved voices. The priest entered the death-chamber and raised an agitation where nature raised none. Mr. Foote scathingly criticised the doctrines of Hell and the Resurrection, and, in passing, alluded to the subject of cremation. The late Bishop of Lincoln had objected to cremation on the ground that it would weaken the popular belief in the Resurrection. Mr. Foote then turned to the Spiritualists, and commented on their readiness to enter on discussion before they had verified the alleged phenomena of the spirit-world. He could not understand the part played by professional mediums. Surely, if a mother in the spirit-world desired to communicate with her son, she would do so personally and directly, without the intervention of a medium. What had evolution to say on the subject of death? Darwinism had made it clear that man was no special creation, that he was fundamentally and essentially an animal, conceived and developed pre-natally just like all other animals. Just as early man had risen from brutish progenitors, so the modern socialised and cosmopolitan man had evolved from early man without a break in the process. At no point could the emergence of "spirit" or "soul" be demonstrated. We might properly speak of the soul of a painter or an orator in the sense of his emotional character, but evolution had not produced any separate entity in the form of the soul. Mr. Foote affirmed that all the idealism and all the loveliness of life sprang from the fact of death. Just as the grandeur of a picture resulted from its admixture of light and shadow, so death lent enhancement to life. Which would a man love most, the things he could lose or the things he could not? Immortal being could never understand love and friendship as we do. Beings who cannot die can dispense with each other's assistance and affection. The holiest things of life grow from the recognition of the inevitableness of death. The doctrine of witchcraft had disappeared, and the beliefs in miracles and in an after-life were also dissolving like the icebergs which floated into warmer seas. The old theological ideas were disappearing before the light of science and the warmth of brotherhood. Science and brotherhood were the pillars of the great temple of humanity.

—Midland Free Press, November 3, 1900.

Obituary.

ONE of the links which bound the early days of our movement with the present was broken on November 4, when our old and esteemed member, Mr. John Gentle, died. He had been intimately connected with the Freethought movement in Glasgow for the last fifty years, during this time acting in various capacities on the committee of the Glasgow Secular Society. Mr. Gentle was known to all the leaders of Secularism, from Charles Southwell to Mr. Foote, and his steady loyalty to early convictions and sustained interest in their propagation are pleasant and refreshing to contemplate. He died at the age of seventy-two, and his funeral, despite the inclemency of the weather, was attended by a goodly number of his old co-workers and friends. Mr. Cohen, representing the National Secular Society, gave a short and impressive address of tribute and respect at the graveside. As one of the minor forces of our movement, the work and example of John Gentle take high place. Honest in his convictions and honorable in his actions, his life is an inspiration to those who take his place in the ranks. With him are buried a host of reminiscences of the early and struggling days of our movement.—T. ROBERTSON, Glasgow.

Acid Drops.

THE Czarina of Russia is "as ladies love to be who love their lords." Naturally she desires a son and heir. To bring about this result, the Count Alexieff, Grand Master of the Ceremonies at the Russian court, has requested special prayers to be offered up during a period of nine days at the church of St. Leonard, near Limoges. This church is visited by large numbers of young married women, who pray to St. Leonard that they may be blessed with male offspring. No doubt it is very good business for the church. But what man in his right senses can believe for a moment that prayers have any influence on the phenomena of embryology? Still, if the Czarina does give birth to a boy, it will be held to redound to the credit of St. Leonard. If the baby happens to be a girl, that will prove nothing, except that St. Leonard was not in an accommodating humor.

We drew attention last week to the wholesale violation of Chinese women by the Christian troops of the Holy Czar of Russia. Since then we have noticed a fresh (if somewhat discreet) reference to the same subject in the *Daily News*. The Peking correspondent of that journal, writing under the date of September 20, states that the part of the city controlled by the Japanese was beginning to resume its old appearance; but in the Russian quarter not one shop in a hundred was open. "The only women to be seen," he says, "are old and wizened crones.....There are no young women to be seen from morning to night. I need not go into the reason for this, but it is a strong reason and an obvious one." The German quarter was in a similar condition. There also the shops were closed, the streets were as deserted, and "the women equally terrified." Such is the beastly brutality of the Christian soldiers who are there to teach the Chinese the superiority of the religion that was represented by the missionaries' well-armed avengers. One can only regret that the Chinese are not strong enough, at present, to drive these filthy Christians into the sea.

Last "Lord's Day" was temperance Sunday in the diocese of the Bishop of Rochester, and temperance sermons were preached in about two hundred churches and mission halls in South London and other districts. It is a pity that the Bishop did not distribute copies of Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer* amongst the clergy in the diocese. That little work would have enabled them to tell the truth about the relation of the Bible to what usually passes as Temperance, but is really Teetotalism. We fancy, however, that the clergy are not too fond of telling the truth on this subject. They quote a few passages against excessive drinking, and hide all the texts of a different character. They do not draw attention to the text that wine "cheereth God and man," neither do they dwell upon the fact that Jesus Christ manufactured a large quantity of wine in order to prolong a wedding feast.

Old Dowie has sent in a bill to the administrator of the extensive estate of the late Mrs. Mary Redding, of Mishawaka, Indiana. He claims 1,000 dollars for travelling ninety miles and baptising the deceased. It is reported, however, that Old Dowie's bill won't be paid voluntarily. No doubt his terms in future will be cash on delivery.

Parsons are often very exclusive. There is the Rev. C. A. Wells, for instance, rector of St. Peter's, Bedford. This gentleman has gravely rebuked two members of his congregation for assisting at a concert in a Wesleyan chapel. They were also members of the church choir, and he has "suspended" them for three months. Happily he is unable to "suspend" them in any other fashion—say from a rope's end.

Rev. W. H. Parr, of the Leytonstone Wesleyan Church, has been preaching a hot and strong sermon against theatres. He denies that any true Christian could think of visiting such places. We presume, however, that he has visited them himself, in order to know what he is talking about. A good many other ministers, apparently, go to theatres for the same object; though we cannot say that, when we have seen them there, they looked particularly distressed.

According to the Rev. W. H. Parr, the majority of stage managers are blackguards and panders. He doesn't use those very terms, but they sum up what he says. It would be interesting to hear the stage managers' opinion of their clerical censor. Some of them might tell him that his pious imagination has conjured up nine-tenths of the vice he denounces. They might also tell him that there is a lot of professional rivalry in his criticism.

Mr. Parr seems to entertain the idea that an actor who personates a wicked character has a tendency to become wicked himself. This shows that, while he may understand acting in the pulpit, he does not understand it on the stage. Whoever heard of the "heavy villain" being a scoundrel? He is generally the mildest of men off the boards. The actor who plays Macbeth doesn't murder kings; the actor who plays Hamlet doesn't kill his uncle; the actor who plays

Othello doesn't smother his wife—he is more likely to be henpecked.

When a great French comedienne was in America a few years ago she was denounced from hundreds of pulpits. One man of God went to the last degree of anathema. Whereupon the witty Frenchwoman asked him whether he had ever heard of Christian charity. "Besides," she said, "why should we professionals be so jealous of each other?" Do you see, Mr. Parr?

Rev. H. K. Haslam, rector of Old, Northamptonshire, preached and printed a sermon on "The Fall of the Sparrows." Nearly one-fourth of it was taken word for word from a Spiritualist book called *I Awoke*, and other parts of the sermon were indebted to the same source. The reverend gentleman explains in *Light* that he got mixed. He says that he "cannot always remember what is the production of my own mind, and how much is derived from some other source." This difficulty in discriminating between *meum* and *tuum* sometimes leads to penal servitude.

The *Birmingham Catholic News* has found a new fault in Mr. H. Percy Ward, who is fighting for a seat as a "Secular Education" member on the local School Board. Mr. Ward is "beardless." Well, perhaps his Catholic censor is bald—maybe as bald as Elisha. Too little hair on the chin or the head is not, however, supposed to disqualify a man for public life. We are aware that Mr. Ward is young, but that is a fault which mends all too soon for most of us. Jesus Christ himself was dead and buried at thirty-three.

What does the *Birmingham Daily Mail* mean by saying that "Mr. Percy Ward poses as the representative of the Secularists"? Why "poses"? Surely the *Mail* is well aware that he has been put forward by the Secularists, and is supported by the only Secular organisation in the city, the Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society. Really, it is the *Mail* that "poses."

The vicar of Alderholt, Hants, observes in his parish magazine, *apropos* of School Board contests, that every elector "has to make the sign of Christ's holy cross opposite the name of the person he votes for." Therefore, he adds, no Christian man should "allow himself to vote for any Jew, Atheist, anti-Churchman, or heretic." This is a suggestion quite worthy of the clerical intellect. Of course, the cross is not exclusively a Christian symbol, and is not specially holy. Christians are constantly referring to it as if crucifixion were some extraordinary form of punishment, instead of a very common penalty imposed in certain centuries. According to the Gospels, two persons were crucified in company with Christ. When Darius conquered Babylon, he put two hundred captives to death on the cross. When Alexander conquered Tyre, he put two thousand captives to death on the cross.

The *Christian World* publishes a letter from the late Dr. Godet, who has been called the *doyen* of continental Protestantism, in which he communicates what must be a very comforting assurance to Christians. He comments on the various views of the Atonement published in that journal, and observes that it does not appear to him that any of those who have joined in the task of elucidation have really succeeded. "The death of Christ, with its causes and consequences, continues beyond the reach of human explanations." He trusts that the contradictions which appear in these various explanations will have no ill effect on the faith of readers.

It is astonishing, observes the *Topical Times*, how some clerical gentlemen smell out wickedness. The Rev. Jacob Plimmer has been to Paris, and he has come back with stories that are making the hair of Presbyterian Scotland curl with interest. But how does he know all these things? the sceptics have asked. And Jacob has told them. "I had occasion to go below the surface a little." H'm!

The Reformed Presbyterians of the United States, otherwise the Covenanters, are in the unfortunate position that their consciences will not allow them to become citizens and voters. The constitution of the Union recognises the voice of the people as the supreme authority. The Covenanter considers that to be derogatory to the sovereignty of God. The laws made in pursuance thereof require the Post-office Department to do some work on the Sabbath, which he thinks also sinful. Such a Constitution he considers it anti-Christian to swear support to, and so, disfranchising himself, he remains a passive spectator. Some ten thousand men are thus politically paralysed by their consciences and strait-laced, narrow, Christian views.

W. Soltau writes from the Rue Faraday, Paris, to the *British Weekly* on Christianity and War. He refers to an article by Judge Bompas on that subject, in which two verses, Luke xxii. 36 and Matthew xxvi. 52, are quoted as being the only two passages in which can be found the direct

teaching of Christ on the question, and the writer draws the conclusion that, "taken together, these passages seem to show that force is sometimes justifiable." But, argues W. Soltau, on examining Luke xxii. 36 with verse 38 also, "does it not rather seem that our Lord was speaking on that occasion to His disciples *in irony*?" During His lifetime, He said, they acknowledged that they had lacked nothing; daily bread and protection He had found them. Now He was leaving them, and they must care for themselves, using purse and scrip, and taking care to have a sword ready. "And they said, Lord, here are two swords." Already they had been thinking of it and taking their measures. "It is enough." Well he knew their thoughts and their feeble faith. One of the two swords was shortly after used by Peter in his attempt at defence—and a blundering attempt it was. I would suggest that, thus read, this passage is completely in harmony with that in Matthew xxvi., and that in no instance do our Lord's words lead us to believe that the use of force is justifiable for His servants."

The Bishop of Ripon tells the following story: "Once a hot-tempered, somewhat grumbling vicar had occasion—or thought he had—to rebuke his curate for some mistake. The curate attempted to explain the matter, when the vicar cut him short by exclaiming, 'Look here, sir. Are you the vicar, or an I?' 'Well, I'm not,' said the curate. 'Then, if you're not the vicar,' said the enraged cleric very emphatically, 'why are you speaking like an idiot?'"

The *People*, under the editorship of Mr. Joseph Hatton, is exhibiting liberal tendencies. On several occasions of late it has been remarkably outspoken in its denunciations of Sabbatarianism. Last Sunday it had a leader-note on Puritan aggressiveness. In this instance it seems to have been especially affected itself by the attitude of certain religionists at Calne, in Wiltshire, who have endeavored to the best of their ability to persecute and intimidate one of the *People's* agents for selling that paper on Sunday. He was, it seems, a candidate for the Town Council, and was bitterly opposed by a number of the local religionists.

Amongst these was a Nonconformist minister, who, in the midst of his Sunday sermon, called upon his congregation not to vote for this particular candidate, because he sold newspapers on Sunday. The reverend gentleman was probably moved to this condemnation by a well-founded suspicion that the Sunday newspapers were infinitely more interesting, and more in public demand, than his Sunday sermons. But then, even this strict Sabbatarian does not preach on Sundays for nothing, any more than Sunday newspapers are published for nothing; and his sermons, in the opinion of a large number of the Calnites, are evidently much less needed.

The Parish Council of Saxilby, near Lincoln, are distressed over Sunday fishing—a bad form of wickedness anywhere, but especially sinful in the holy boundaries of Saxilby. The wonder is that the Almighty, being so much offended, should allow the fish to bite. But there seems to be some pretty good angling there. The Parish Council have petitioned the Great Central Railway Company against issuing cheap tickets for fishing matches on Sundays. The railway company will probably please themselves, and the Saxilby Council might as well devote themselves to highway and sanitary improvements.

At Liverpool the clergy are objecting to Sunday tramway traffic. As if, forsooth, people do not want to ride on Sundays as well as on other days. In the summer time traffic of this kind is especially to be approved. The clergy want to stop the trams in the hope that they can fill their churches. It is a vain hope, and their great solicitude for tramway employees—who are strong enough to take care of themselves, or at any rate do not require *their* assistance—is mere "bogey."

Apparently with surprise, newspapers have been announcing that a Church parochial gathering at Wycombe was recently held in a brewery. To those who have read the Bible, and believe in Christ's first reported miracle, and to those who have read Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer*, there is nothing incongruous in the circumstance of a Church meeting being held in such a place. Anyway, the Established Church generally has not been above accepting handsome gifts from those who carry brewing establishments on.

Is it not amusing to notice the awkward efforts of Bible-believers to "climb down"? In time we shall get to know how much—or, rather, how little—of God's Holy Word the pious really do believe in. Here is the Rev. Ambrose Shepherd, of Elgin-place, Glasgow, endeavoring, in a lecture on "The Use and Purposes of the Bible," to stave off criticism by withdrawal of claims. He says the Bible does not undertake to teach this, and it does not undertake to teach that, until one is rather curious to know what it does in reality propose to teach. But this throwing out of ballast, and the motive for it, is for the most part too obvious not to be perceived. Besides, the denials which we meet with nowadays in so many religious journals are absolutely dishonest.

It is dishonest to pretend that the Bible does not undertake to teach, solemnly and seriously and literally, these very inconvenient things which are now repudiated. Of course, it has taught them—teaches them now; and men who have in the past been bold enough to deny them in print or by lecture have suffered atrociously at the hands of religionists in consequence.

Says this apologetic shepherd of the Lord's flock: "Let criticism do its best or its worst; the spiritual contents of the Bible are the gold that will suffer from no furnace that mortal man can heat." That is an absurd assertion. The historical portion, as he practically admits, has suffered, and why may not the spiritual, especially as they are so inextricably mixed?

The severe typhoon which struck Hong Kong is another Providential act which may be commended to the consideration of those who build their faith upon the Lord, and pray for his special interposition. Immense damage and loss of life occurred in this typhoon, owing to the sinking of native craft. So far as these casualties, at any rate, were concerned, the Lord seems to have remained in his usual listless condition.

The *Christian Advocate* presents its readers with a portrait of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. The photograph is spoken of as a triumph of art. There must be something wrong about that statement. The "triumph" fails to present him as quite an Adonis. There is, however, an air of distinction about Mr. Hughes. It is all explained in the note printed below the portrait: "Mr. W. J. Marshall, of Belfast, has supplied me with a clerical suit, and I can strongly recommend both the material and the workmanship.—H. Price Hughes."

A Roman Catholic periodical, entitled *The Poor Soul's Friend and St. Joseph's Monitor*, is published at Chudleigh, Devon. It has the high distinction of being "blessed by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII." It is "devoted to the interests of the Holy Souls in Purgatory," and "pleads most eloquently" the "cause of the 'Dear Ones Departed.'" A correspondent of *The Poor Soul's Friend*, P. Wynne, "calls attention to the consoling fact that one hundred days' indulgence can be gained for the souls in Purgatory each time we recite the short but beautiful prayer, 'My Jesus, mercy,' in their behalf." If this is too much, readers are reminded that the suffering souls relieved "certainly will not forget us when our time comes."

There is still prophecy in Israel; but nowadays it scarcely pays. An East London Jewess was last week fined £15 for telling fortunes by means of the Bible and key spell.

Canon Driver, D.D., recently delivered an address to a large audience of past and present students of New College, Oxford. He made some significant statements. For instance, he said: "The historical books of the Old Testament are seen to be no longer, as was once supposed, the works of Moses, Joshua, or Samuel, but are seen to present a multiplicity of phenomena which cannot be accounted for or reasonably explained except on the supposition that they came into existence gradually; that they are compiled out of the writings of distinct and independent authors characterised by different styles, and representing different points of view, which were combined together and otherwise adjusted until they finally assumed their present form. The differences between the documents thus brought to light are seen, further, to be such that, in many cases, they can no longer be held to be the work of contemporary writers, or to spring, as was once supposed, from a single generation."

Continuing in this strain, Canon Driver said: "Archæology supports criticism in pressing upon theologians and apologists the urgent need of a revision of current notions respecting parts of the Old Testament narratives. *Mutatis mutandis*, what has been said holds good of the poetical books. Their connection with the names with which they are traditionally associated must be almost uniformly abandoned; in some cases language, in others contents and character, imperatively demand this. The poetical books are seen now, in fact, to have much wider significance than they would have if they had been the work of David and Solomon alone."

The vicar of Denford was found drowned in a river near the vicarage, and an open verdict was returned. He went downstairs at two o'clock on Sunday morning to get a sandwich, and never returned. The former vicar of the parish met his death by drowning near the same spot.

A New Zealand cleric, the Rev. Dr. Elmslie, has been saying unpleasant things about "bookmakers." In accordance with the habit of his class, he has been unable to avoid exaggeration, and that has left him open to some cutting remarks from an English sporting journal. What is the good, that paper eventually inquires, of arguing with the average parson? "Accustomed to hold forth from his pulpit—'six feet above contradiction'—without interruption, he, on

occasion, handles the truth with alarming freedom." In this case the average parson, represented by the Rev. Dr. Elmslie, does not appear to have confined himself to the truth.

An inquest was held at Portsmouth on the body of James Shepherd, aged 76, who committed suicide by cutting his throat with a penknife. Deceased was a naval pensioner, and a heavy drinker; but in an evil hour, apparently, he gave up distilled spirit for another kind of spirit which proved more pernicious. He developed a mania for reading the Bible. For fifteen hours a day he pored over the pages of that curious volume, until at last, as his daughter testified, he "became dazed." The jury found the usual verdict of temporary insanity. A more accurate verdict would have been, "Death from an overdose of Scripture."

A wicked and perfidious man, apparently, is the Rev. Dr. Dixon, of the Epiphany Baptist Church, in Boston, whose wife is suing him for divorce. It is in evidence that he made assignations with women in the study of his church, and he wrote love-letters to others. Some of his letters were full of the names of flowers, the significance of which has been made plain by the discovery of a key to the floral cipher. There was nothing too tender or warm for this clergyman to say to his female correspondents. Mrs. Dixon got material upon which to base her demand for a divorce by boring holes through doors and observing her husband's deplorable conduct. There is no doubt cast on the orthodoxy of the Rev. Dr. Dixon.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The same number of the *Truthseeker* from which the above paragraph was clipped contains several other instances of how some American men of God are never weary in well-doing. The Rev. L. S. Brown, of Liberty, New York, pastor of one of the largest Methodist churches in Sullivan county, committed suicide in the Central Hotel, Delhi, by taking laudanum. He was in financial trouble, and had been accused of forgery. The Rev. Henry M. Wharton, a well-known evangelist, is indicted for fraud. Amongst other appropriations, he had secured 13,000 dollars on property he held in trust for an orphanage. The Rev. Rowland P. Hills, formerly of England, is in jail in Omaha for deserting his wife and committing bigamy. The Rev. S. S. Bandy, a colored Baptist preacher, was arrested for attempting to murder a fourteen-year-old girl. He was found dead in his cell, with his throat cut.

Mr. Augustus Hare, in his new book of Recollections, tells a good story of Carlyle. Some ecclesiastic asked him what would happen if Jesus Christ returned to earth now. "Happen?" said Carlyle; "why, Dickie Milnes would ask him to dinner, and ask Pontius Pilate to meet him." Dickie Milnes was afterwards better known as Lord Houghton. He was notorious for the catholicity of his taste for entertaining distinguished people.

Mr. Hare tells another good story of Cardinal Wiseman. This famous Catholic priest was invited to dine by some friends; it was Friday, but they had forgotten to provide a fast-day dinner. But the Cardinal was quite equal to the occasion. Stretching forth his hands in benediction over the table, he said, "I pronounce all this to be fish," and then proceeded to do justice to the good things before him.

When the great Dean Swift was conducting a morning service, and had come to the "Dearly-beloved brethren" part, he looked carefully round the church, and, seeing nobody there but himself and the clerk, he suited the words to the situation, and said: "Dearly-beloved brother, the Scripture moveth you and me in sundry places." It was not quite so bad as this the other Sunday evening in the parish church of Melpash, in Dorsetshire. Still, it was bad enough. The service lasted an hour and a half, and the vicar preached an elaborate sermon; but he had only five auditors, and four of them belonged to the choir. We presume the villagers were enjoying themselves in other establishments that deal in "spirits." However that may be, it is odd to see so many new churches being built while the old ones are emptying.

Miss Marie Corelli seems to have changed her opinion about the superiority of her own sex. A *Daily Mail* interviewer represents her as saying: "There can scarcely be again such a man as Shakespeare. Certainly, never a woman. The greatest woman who ever lived is only fit to grovel at Shakespeare's feet." It is said that an infuriated sheep is one of the most dangerous of animals. In the same way, we suppose, when the proud people are humble their humility is wonderful.

Dean Farrar and other clergymen preached some sermons on Shakespeare in the Collegiate Church of Stratford-on-Avon, and these discourses are to be published shortly under the editorship of the vicar, the Rev. George Arbuthnot. It will be our duty to deal with this volume when it is ready. We daresay, beforehand, that an effort is made to show that Shakespeare was a Christian, or at least a friend of religion.

Robert Dudfield, of Smethwick, who died recently at the age of fifty-four, weighed thirty-two stone. He was nine feet round the body, and three feet around the calf of each leg. Special apparatus was necessary to get the vast coffin out of the house, and a brewer's dray had to be utilised to convey it to the grave. Curiously, the deceased had been a drayman himself, so that his last ride was something like many he had taken before. It is to be hoped he will get up a good deal thinner on the resurrection morning.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has had to decline the *New York Journal's* application for an article or an interview. "My state of health," he says, "is such that I am able to do an extremely small amount of work. The task of bringing up to date such of my books as most need revision will probably never be achieved, and even the partial achievement will be made possible only by excluding the abstractions [? distractions]. Daily a large part of the little energy remaining to me is frittered away in correspondence, and I now find I must make the rule absolute against all letters save those of immediate personal concern."

What a lot of foolish busybodies there must be in the so-called civilised world when a great writer is pestered by so many gratuitous correspondents. Even in our own small way, we find such correspondence a terrible bane. Some people seem to think we have nothing to do but to read and answer their letters. Now and then quite impossible things are asked for "by return of post." We have even been requested to write essays for persons who have undertaken the task and find themselves incompetent. "Something that would take half an hour to read"—"It would not be difficult to you who are so well up in the subject." Probably the applicants haven't the slightest idea of how long it takes to write what cannot be read in less than thirty minutes. Nor do they reflect how wearisome it is to be eternally wielding the pen.

Secularism, says the Roman Catholic Bishop of Middlesborough, is the curse of the day. We reply that Roman Catholicism is the curse of the ages.

Samuel Froomkin, a master painter, and President of two synagogues, is bringing a libel action in a New York court against Harris Hyman, who reported that the plaintiff had been smoking on the Sabbath. Froomkin alleges that he lost his reputation as a pious Jew in consequence, and that his business fell off deplorably. A libel suit like this is calculated to promote the gaiety of nations.

According to the newspaper heading, it was "A Bad Boy's Suicide." The bad boy was Arthur Leopold Hobbs, a draper's porter, of Battersea. He had been imprisoned for theft, had then been sent to the Church Army Youth's Home, and had afterwards robbed his master of small sums. He committed suicide by shooting himself with a cheap pistol. "By the time you get this," he said in a letter to his mother, "I shall be in the next world with my Savior, Jesus Christ." If dying people speak the truth, as the proverb says, this "bad boy" is now in heaven—where, by the way, he is likely to find plenty of congenial society.

Artful Mary.

THE PARSON'S SONG.

(Tune: "Archie Laurie.")

MISS MARY'S bairn is bonnie,
His only pa's a Jew;
For Mary's funny story
To me appears untrue—
To me appears untrue,
And ne'er believed can be,
Yet with bonnie Mary's story
I'll lie for £ s. d.

Her boy dislikes the sawdust,
And seeks to live as one
Who fancies that the parents
Should work, and sons do none—
Should work, and sons do none,
But damn and blast a tree;
Oh, with bonnie Mary's story
I'll lie for £ s. d.

This Jew is gone a-lying,
A rather airy feat,
For one so lately lying
A mass of loathsome meat—
A mass of loathsome meat,
For all the world, and me;
Oh, I'll boom this ancient story,
'Twill pay me £ s. d.!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 18, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road; 7.30, "The Riddle of the Universe."

To Correspondents.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—All communications for Mr. 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.
- W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your valued cuttings.
- F. E. WILLIS.—Glad to hear the "saints" are fighting hard in the Birmingham School Board elections. Thanks for cuttings. Mr. Foote is in first-rate health.
- W. H. MORRIS.—Obliged. See paragraph. Thanks also for your good wishes.
- C. BLYTON.—Your admiration of Mr. Foote's presidential work is expressed in very flattering language. He hopes to deserve a tithe of your compliments. You can order Ingersoll's *Coming Civilisation* from our publishing office.
- E. M. HOPES.—Your letter reaches us on November 13, twelve days after the elections took place. There must be a blunder somewhere.
- A. FRANKLIN.—Never mind the candidate's other opinions, if he is sound on Secular Education. That is the all-important point. We strongly advise our friends to support those School Board candidates, and those only, who are straight on *this* point. Everything else is really very subsidiary.
- VIGILANS.—We have our eye on the ex-felon.
- YOUNG FREETHINKER.—It was duly received, and is waiting for room.
- G. J. WARREN, 20 Rhodeswell-road, Limehouse, E., acknowledges with thanks the receipt of a parcel of clothing from Annie E. Embleton for distribution.
- SECULARIST.—Thanks; but we would rather see the Report before referring to the matter. Can you send us a copy?
- TWO NEW READERS.—Shall be dealt with in our next. Thanks.
- OLD FREETHINKER.—Instead of giving you advice, we will apprise you of our own intention. We have a householder's vote in the Finsbury Division, and we shall plump for Mr. Barwick. Socialists are becoming more practical, and there is nothing in his program to frighten any progressive citizen. He is a staunch supporter of Secular Education, and that is enough for us. Any harm he *might* do—where you differ from him—sinks into insignificance beside the *good* he could do by promoting the cause of Secular Education on the London School Board.
- SHILLING WEEK.—T. M. G., 1s.; C. B. W., 1s.; Spencer Lloyd, 5s.
- MR. and MRS. PEGG (Manchester) send us the £2 2s. they promised towards the Freethought Twentieth Century Fund.
- FREETHOUGHT TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND.—Horace Seal sends cheque in redemption of his promise of £25 to this Fund. He expresses the opinion that Freethought, while not financially or outwardly very successful in comparison with the Christian Churches, is nevertheless a powerful leavening influence in the religious world, and thus does a vast amount of indirect good. He suggests that we might pen an encouraging article from this point of view.
- A. HAYNES.—We prefer to answer your queries through the *Freethinker*. (1) Yes, Mr. Foote did debate some years ago with the Rev. H. B. Chapman. The discussion took place in the Secular Hall where you say you enjoyed hearing Mr. Foote last Sunday. (2) We do not know, and we do not care, whether the reverend gentleman "claims to have come out victorious." (3) The debate was not published.
- R. E. OWEN.—The late Sargeant Cox wrote a capital book on Public Speaking—probably the best extant on that subject. There is an American book, by William Matthews, entitled *Oratory and Orators*. An English edition was published by Hamilton, Adams, & Co., in 1879, but we believe it is out of print now. This work can also be highly recommended. Mr. G. J. Holyoake's *Public Speaking and Debate* is vivacious and suggestive.
- RECEIVED.—Truthseeker (New York)—Glasgow Herald—Freidenker—North-Eastern Daily Gazette—Blue Grass Blade—The Crescent—Torch of Reason—Nottingham Express—Stratford Express—Birmingham Catholic News—Two Worlds—Light—Public Opinion (New York).
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention. THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.
- SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE lectures this evening at the Athenæum Hall, 73, Tottenham Court-road. His subject will be "The Riddle of the Universe"—*apropos* of Haeckel's recently published book bearing that title. Freethinkers should give publicity to this lecture amongst their liberal-minded friends and acquaintances. They might even try to tempt Christians to attend on this occasion.

Mr. Foote had a good audience at Camberwell on Sunday evening, though not quite as good as he has been accustomed to there. We understand that the advertising which used to be done has been discontinued. For our part, we think this is a mistake. People cannot come to a meeting if they do not know of it. If a large hall is to be filled there must be adequate publicity, and in the long run it pays for itself, and something more. We can call to mind several Branches that dropped advertising at one time or another, but they all had to recur to it. Of course we are not saying this by way of complaint, but by way of suggestion.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured in the Athenæum Hall. The audience was a good one, but not so large as usual. Mr. Watts's description of the nature of Jehovah caused much laughter, and the delineation given of his character and death called forth hearty applause. Mr. Jones, of Hyde Park notoriety, offered some opposition, but his speech consisted of the again-and-again-repeated statement that the lecture was too comical for any serious reply to be given to it. He confessed that he was unable to answer Mr. Watts—an avowal which the audience appeared to readily believe.

On Monday last Mr. Charles Watts commenced the course of week-night lectures which has been arranged for London, under the new scheme, in the Wellington Hall, Islington. Unfortunately, the wet night interfered with the audience, but those present marked their appreciation of the lecture by frequent applause. An interesting discussion followed, which the audience evidently enjoyed. Mr. C. H. Cattell presided, and Miss Vance was, as usual, well to the front attending to the literature.

The next free lecture at Wellington Hall, Islington, will be delivered on Monday evening, November 26. November 19 was pre-engaged. The other Mondays will run consecutively. Mr. Cohen is to lecture on November 26, taking for his subject, "Missions to the Heathen." Mr. Foote follows on December 3, and Mr. A. B. Moss on December 10. North London Freethinkers are invited to distribute handbills of this course of lectures. Application for them should be made at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

We have already announced that, after much difficulty, a hall has been engaged for a series of four Sunday evening lectures in East London. This is under the Concentration Scheme in connection with the Freethought Twentieth Century Fund. The hall is at the Aldgate Public Baths, in Goulston-street, near the Aldgate-street Metropolitan Station. It is a large place, with chairs for five hundred people, and standing-room for a good many more. The admission will be free, and a collection will be taken to help defray the expenses. Mr. C. Cohen leads off this evening (Nov. 18) with a lecture on "The Use of Religion." He will be followed by Mr. C. Watts. Mr. Foote will give up a night at the Athenæum Hall in order to include himself in this course. The last lecturer will be Mr. W. Heaford.

East London friends are earnestly invited to do their utmost to get the large hall of the Aldgate Public Baths well filled on each occasion. It ought not to be difficult to do so. There are plenty of potential auditors in East London if they are only apprised of the lectures. We may add that opportunity will be given for questions and discussion.

Sunday evening lectures would do good at Clapham, Brixton, Battersea, or Croydon. We should be much obliged if friends in those districts would try to learn particulars of suitable and available halls, and forward us the information, or send it to Miss Vance, the N. S. S. Secretary. The sooner, of course, the better. We want to get to work immediately.

Application was made for the use of the large hall of the Paddington Public Baths for three evenings, under the Concentration Scheme. Subjects were submitted as desired, and the answer came that the Committee would let the hall for one evening. Probably they want to see who we are, and what we are like; and, if nothing happens to the building, then or soon afterwards, they will let it to us again. The matter is not absolutely decided, so we cannot make a more definite announcement; except that, if only one evening can be secured at the outset, Mr. Foote has resolved to take it himself in the circumstances. It will be rather a tax upon him, but the reason will no doubt be obvious, and an occasional martyrdom is one of the perquisites of the presidency.

The Annual General Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, will be held at the Manchester Hotel, near the Aldersgate-street Metropolitan Station, on Friday evening, November 30. Members are requested to make a note of the date. They will receive legal notice of the meeting in due course, together with proxy forms, which should be filled in (if at all) and returned to the Secretary, at the Society's registered office, at least two days beforehand. It should be borne in mind that every proxy form, to be valid, must bear a penny stamp—a place for which is indicated; and that the member's signature must be written over the stamp. The signature also requires a witness.

Mr. Percy Ward has done a good thing by printing on one of his election bills some striking extracts from old speeches of Mr. Chamberlain, the late Mr. George Dawson, and the late Dr. R. W. Dale, in favor of Secular Education. "Support the old Birmingham policy" and "Plump for Ward." Such is the moral of the handbill.

There is to be another debate on Spiritualism—this time between Mr. H. Percy Ward and Mr. Ernest Marklew. It is to take place on Monday and Tuesday, November 26 and 27, in the Music Hall, Surrey-street, Sheffield.

Mr. H. C. Phillips, 160 Mile End-road, E., honorary secretary to Mr. George Hewitt's School Board Election Committee, wishes to appeal through our columns for financial and other assistance. Mr. Hewitt is the Social Democratic Labor candidate in the Tower Hamlets Division. He is straight on the question of Secular Education.

Canon Nolloth having contributed a long letter to the *Beverley Guardian* on "Sunday Observance," Mr. G. Dawson Baker follows with an admirable reply from the Secular standpoint. It is to be wished that Freethinkers who are able to write letters to the local press would do so whenever the opportunity arises.

Letters have appeared in the *Glasgow Herald* on "The Bible and the Higher Criticism." The notorious Harry Long is in the correspondence, of course; on the other hand, there is an excellent and pointed letter by "W. D. M." on the Freethought side. It will be widely read in such a journal.

Socialists and God.

LEST there should be any misunderstanding as to the spirit in which these remarks are made, it may be as well to say at the start that I am a Socialist; that is to say, I believe the ideal of those who strive for social solidarity, for a community which shall be a social whole, to be higher and better than the ideal of those who regard the community as nothing more than a heterogeneous crowd of struggling units, fighting and oppressing one another, in which the "fittest," who "survive," frequently do so by reason of the possession of some of the ugliest and least attractive qualities in human nature. And when we find, as we do find, at the present day, that it is the Socialists, and practically they only, who raise any serious and sustained protest against militarist waste; when we find the middle-class and Liberal politicians either frankly joining the Socialists or gravitating into the openly reactionary camp; and when we find arrayed on the one side all privilege, vested interest, militarism, clericalism, and brainless indifference, and on the other intelligence, self-sacrifice, civic interest and alertness, and a desire to realise a higher national life, it does not really seem very difficult to choose our path. For these reasons the present writer was certainly gratified at such successes as the Socialist party generally gained in the recent elections. There is, of course, much that may be criticised in the Socialist parties in England—they would not be human if they were immaculate; though, whilst in one breath the enemies of Socialism denounce it as a doctrine of rank plunder and public immorality, in the next they declare that Socialism is too visionary and lofty an ideal for mere men.

But one of the weak spots in Socialism in England—a weakness not to be found in the Socialist parties of the Continent, which are almost all undisguisedly Freethinking and Atheistic—is the tendency to toy with religion, or, at the best, to play a non-sectarian game. Instead of recognising that theology must be treated, not merely with indifference, still less with friendship, but with open and determined hostility, if there is to be any permanence in social reform, there is too much

namby-pamby diluted theology about many of the British Socialist leaders. One hears too much of the nonsense about Christ being the first Socialist, and all the rest of it, from some guides of the proletariat. This phase of the Socialist movement may be said to reach its most significant expression in the *Clarion* and its editor "Nunquam," who, despite his popular success as a pamphleteer, remains a mere unreliable sentimentalist with no consistent scientific policy, and who, in the gloomy mood of this week, will sadly proceed to traverse everything which the optimist mood of last week laid down as law. It is one of the reflections on the general level of English culture at the present day—a subject which recent events have driven many detached observers to more or less critically examine—that there is scarcely a country in Europe, certainly not France or Germany, where so ill-equipped and unstable a mind as Nunquam's could attain such eminence as a Socialist leader.

But the recent election of Mr. Keir Hardie for Merthyr has furnished some further examples of the kind of thing against which the intellect of Socialism must simply set its face if the cause is to be successfully piloted. *Justice*, an organ which, one may observe, is much more thorough and scientific, and much less goody-goody, than any of the other Socialist papers, contained the other day the text of the election address which Mr. Keir Hardie issued at Merthyr; and it must be said the perusal of this document does not encourage very high hopes in so far as that quarter is concerned.

In the first place, the personal note struck is anything but modest. I suppose no one would look for modesty in an election address, but the spectacle of a man puffing himself and his own actions and services, rather than setting forward his principles, is not pleasant. But the religious references are what most excite our interest. Here, for instance, is one extract:—

"My programme is the programme of Labor. My cause is Labor's cause—the cause of humanity—the cause of God."

Now that last tag is redolent of all the worst cant that afflicts society. In London and elsewhere during the election various Tory candidates put out posters and leaflets running: "Vote for So-and-So, for Queen, and for God." But the device might have been left with the Tories. Apart from the want of dignity it evidences, its very ridiculousness might have checked its use by a democratic candidate. If Mr. Keir Hardie's cause was the "cause of God," what was his opponent's cause? The Devil's? And how does Mr. Hardie know his cause is God's cause? Has he a special telephone? In any case, we are left with the reflection that God handles his cause very badly when it has to depend on the chance of a contested election. If Jehovah is going to start electioneering, he will really require to take lessons from Birmingham, for if Mr. Hardie and his friends were God's candidates, as it were, Joe has left Jehovah a long way behind. As a matter of fact, indeed, "God's cause," through Mr. Hardie himself, suffered a defeat at Preston, to say nothing of elsewhere. Doesn't Mr. Hardie think his God might have done just a little more for his own side? There is no record even that he subscribed a penny to Mr. Hardie's election fund. The sober fact is that Mr. Hardie, if he used this phrase about God sincerely, has a vast deal to learn before he can be regarded as an efficient servant of the cause of social sanity; whilst, if he used it insincerely, which personally I do not for a moment believe, the case would be about as hopeless as could well be imagined.

Further on, however, in the same election address there occurs this passage:—

"I am a Democrat in politics, and a Socialist in economics. I first learned my Socialism in the New Testament, where I still find my chief inspiration."

This is the kind of thing that brings Socialism into disrepute, and simply plays the game of its enemies. Really the preposterousness of this talk about the Socialism of the New Testament is too ridiculous for discussion. Where in the New Testament does Mr. Hardie find his Socialism? Is it in the haphazard collection of moral and immoral platitudes and mysticisms alleged to have been uttered by a mythical Jesus? Is it in the inculcation of poverty, the depreciation of steady industry, the injunction to love one's enemies?

If so, why did Mr. Hardie contest the seat against his opponent? Does he love, say, Mr. Chamberlain, whom he denounces, in so many terms, as a corrupt liar? It would be futile to seriously pursue a criticism of Mr. Hardie's attitude; but that attitude is the index of a good deal of shallowness and ignorance, which has to be countered amongst scientific and thoughtful Socialists, if Socialism is not to perish.

For Socialism must make headway in so far as it stands for an honest and clear-headed survey of politics, a moral progress to a more stable civilisation, a scientific reconstruction of society which shall evolve order out of the chaos which reigns to-day. Socialism, if it is to have permanent value, must, in fact, mean the application of intelligence to the problem of human society. For those who would forward it by clap-trap and an appeal to mob-superstition there can only be failure. Howsoever else it may come, progress cannot come *that* way.

FREDERICK RYAN.

Freethought in Switzerland.

ONE of the chief figures amongst the many striking personalities assembled at the recent International Freethought Congress at Paris was Monsieur Charles Fulpius. He is a tall, dark, severe-looking man, of modest, unassuming character, but withal a learned man—an earnest stalwart for Freethought; one who impresses you with the weight and dignity of the old classic Roman, whose type of feature seems to have lineally descended to the resuscitator of Swiss Freethought, who inaugurated in 1890 the Geneva Freethought Society, of which he is president, and founded this year *Lumière* ("Light"), the organ of the movement in Switzerland. M. Fulpius has set himself the task of awakening the dead indifference of his compatriots to the great struggle between science and religion, and seems to have received the inspiration of his journalistic labors chiefly from witnessing the enthusiasm with which the French and Belgian Freethinkers were preparing themselves for the tasks imposed by the program of the recent Congress. The new paper appears monthly, and is practically a revival of the work carried on by the *Rationalist*, published at Geneva from 1861 to 1870, under the direction of Martin Bouchey, Baron Miron of Ponnat, Populus Leo, and other brave spirits who fought under the flag of Freethought, in order to redeem the sturdy mountaineers from a worse than Austrian tyranny—the tyranny of their own superstition.

A remarkable institution of Genevan Freethought is the Feast of the Tree of Science. It takes place every year at the winter solstice, answering to our Christmas; and, encouraged by the great success of the function in 1899, the Society has already appointed a Committee in order to render the approaching solemnity as instructive as possible to the young people, for whose special benefit the Feast has been instituted. Every endeavor is made to attach the sympathy of the rising generation to Freethought by judicious appeals to their emotions and their reason. The festal occasion is made one of rational instruction and rejoicing for the children at a season when superstition specially appeals to the gastronomic sense of its votaries, and builds fresh altars on the stomachs of the faithful. The feast equally serves as a means of bringing together whole families of Freethinkers at a period of universal holiday, and so consecrating the occasion to the strengthening of their faith in humanity by mutual encouragement and friendly congratulations, as also by the remembrance brought vividly before their eyes, by the addresses and commemorations made at the function in question, of the benefits which science bestows upon the race.

The point next to be noted may be useful as information for those plutocratic Freethinkers whose leisure and means may enable them in the future to visit Geneva. The city being much frequented by strangers, the Society there now issues cards of temporary membership for the benefit of foreigners staying for a time at Geneva, whereby, on paying a subscription of fifty centimes per month (fivepence), they are enabled to attend the meetings of the Society and to enjoy the advantages of its library. The hall in which the

meetings are held is at No. 34 Rue du Marché, and the joint address of the President and Secretary of the Society, and office of *Lumière*, is No. 47 Boulevard du Pont d'Arve; and, judging from the subjects treated, and by an able and instructive address by M. Fulpius on "The Origin of Man," now published in pamphlet form, which I have had the pleasure of reading, the meetings are fully worthy of the support of foreign Freethinkers who are able to understand French.

A word on the Statutes, or Rules, of the Genevan Freethought Society may here be interesting, by way of comparison with our own aims and objects. The declared aim of the Society is fourfold:—

(a) To augment the scientific knowledge of its members. With that end in view lectures on Evolution, the Origin of Man, historical addresses connected with the martyrdom of Servetus, and the labors of other Freethinkers in the past, have quite recently been delivered to large audiences under the auspices of the Society.

(b) To help forward the emancipation of thought, and the struggle against prejudice and superstition.

(c) To establish the closest relations between all those who desire that everybody should enjoy liberty of thinking in accordance with their reason, rather than have their thought subjected to faith and credulity.

(d) To follow the search after truth and the love of goodness, taking science and progress as bases of our endeavor.

The mutual obligations and rights of the members are expressed as under:—

1. Each member undertakes a moral engagement towards the Society, to avoid as far as possible all participation in the ceremonies and practices of religion.

2. The members engage themselves to lend mutual counsel and protection to each other to the utmost of their power.

3. In the event of a purely civil marriage of one of its members being contemplated, the Society will take care, subject to the consent of the happy couple, to send a representative to take part in the legal ceremony.

4. Members are invited not to allow their children to be baptised, and in that event the Society undertakes to organise a secular ceremony in substitution for the so-called sacred one.

5. Members desiring a purely secular funeral may make a declaration in duplicate, on a document duly stamped and attested by four witnesses, two of whom should be the President and some other member of the Society. The four witnesses have to sign the declaration as well as the member making the same. One copy is kept by the President in the archives of the Society, and the other remains in the custody of the member. When these conditions are complied with, the Society undertakes to see that the wishes of the deceased are respected, and engages, if necessary, to meet the expenses of the funeral.

Rules of this kind may, to some people, perhaps, seem somewhat rigid and sectarian; but they certainly serve to cement the members together by the ties of solidarity, and tend to prevent that leakage which indifference (another word too often for incohesion) occasions. The above provisions, coupled with various secular ceremonies (such as the Feast of the Tree of Science above noted), are found in the rules of several other Continental Freethought Societies; and these rules—especially those of the Spanish Freethinkers—are so important that I propose to devote a special article to a consideration of the subject.

Many English Freethinkers will, I hope, give themselves the pleasure of seeing Geneva and meeting M. Fulpius and other Swiss Freethinkers in 1902, when the next International Freethought Congress meets, in accordance with the determination of the Paris Congress, at the beautiful city where Calvin once ruled as a tiger and buried his fangs deep in the flesh of Servetus. The Swiss Freethinkers are preparing a cordial reception for all the friends of mental liberty, and are justly proud of the honor conferred upon them by the recent Congress; and we may all rest assured, from what we know of M. Fulpius, his cordiality of character and his zeal for Freethought, and the well-known hospitality of the Swiss character, that the welcome extended to the Freethought delegates to be sent to Geneva in 1902 will be worthy of the noble cause which did not die when Servetus was murdered, which Rousseau adorned with his illustrious pen, and whose temple is built, not, like Christianity, on blood and fire, but on the solid foundations of liberty and progress.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Christian Lies About Shelley.

"To what damned deeds religion urges men."

—LUCRETIVS.

SHELLEY died so long since that he seems to belong to a wholly different era from our own. Even to a man born so early in the century as Browning, it seemed a wonder to have met a person who had seen him. "And did you once see Shelley?" he asked.

Shelley—born when the French Revolution was already in full career—was but twenty-four years old in the year of "bloody Waterloo." Unlike most of the other great writers of the time—Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, for instance—Shelley was far enough removed from the Revolution to escape its most violent distractions, while he was close enough to the great movement to fall within the range of its dominating suggestion. It was possible for Shelley to forget the horrors and forgive the disappointments, and to ascribe to the correct causes the partial failures of such bright promises.

The extraordinary effect exercised by the Revolution is now one of the commonplaces of history. The fact does not obtrude itself; but Shelley really belongs to an order of writers of which the type is French rather than English, and of which Rousseau is the greatest representative. Rousseau and Shelley wrote, not merely for artistic, but for propagandist ends—to impress their ideas upon others by the force of eloquence. In the last analysis they are alike in mental type and in the objects aimed at. Shelley did not originate the philosophy in his poetry; he merely adopted it, borrowing indirectly from Godwin and directly from the great French Freethinkers of the eighteenth century. But the ideas had all the force of novelty. Rousseau and Shelley merely carried on a great tradition; but to the priest-ridden people they addressed, the views propounded were in truth a new evangel.

Nothing is more remarkable in the France of that time than the weakness of the opposition to the revolutionary ideas. The comparative impotence of the Great Lying Christian Church was very significant. In spite of some slight differences between Voltaire and Rousseau, the Freethinkers had it very nearly all their own way. Their teaching passed all social barriers—found its way among all classes. The twin despotisms of the Monarchy and the Great Lying Church had been pressed too far. The whole country, with one unchecked impulse, rose and acclaimed the apostles of Liberty.

England, on the other hand, presented a complete contrast. The ideas which became so popular in France only served in England to bring out the very worst side of the Great Lying Christian Church. The years succeeding the introduction of the revolutionary ideas in this country were mainly characterised by a blind and unreasoning intolerance. Freethinkers and Radicals were imprisoned, transported, and fined. The Free-thought evangel found its finest expression in Shelley's writings. A poet in the first instance, enthusiastic, ardent, and filled with the love of humanity, he imagined all mankind to be on his own level. He dreamed of a coming golden age, and common men and women were awed and inspired by his magnificent and wonderful vision—that to have seen its splendors for a moment was privilege enough.

At the end of the nineteenth century we find that Shelley emerges as the supreme figure among his contemporaries, destined to immortality of fame. Many of his rivals, who overshadowed him whilst he was living, have almost faded into mere names. But the Atheist poet has a message for generations yet unborn. Christian writers are loth to admit Shelley's Freethought. Being religious themselves, they pretend that a man of genius cannot be an Atheist, and so they tell lies, and strain their faculties to disprove what Shelley asserted all through his life.

Orthodox writers are always finding opportunities of imposing upon the ignorance and credulity of ordinary readers. In the case of Shelley their impudence is simply brazen. Professor Henry Morley, whose pen was at work in the interests of the Great Lying Christian Church for so many years, is a typical sinner in this respect. In his introduction to the popular

edition of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* he is simply unpardonable. This is the way the Christian Professor defames the dead Atheist:—

"Shelley, driven by wrongs of the world that falsely claimed alliance with the love of God, had wildly cast aside faith in the God whose name he had so often heard taken in vain. He had cast away the soiled shell, believing it to be the substance, and, denying God in the letter while he drew near to him in the spirit, he closed his *Prometheus* with expressions of the living soul of Christianity. He found Truth, but he did not know her by her name. The over-sensibility of a mind not wholly sound led him to give up the guidance of his life to passing, half-insane emotions, leading him into actions that no healthy judgment can call good. But the refuge he seeks from the wrongs of life is—though he does not know it—at the feet of Christ. The true Christian hears, through the wildest music in the utterance of *Prometheus Unbound*, the cry to which his own soul answers with sure hope, and claims fellowship with the singer who presses, like the lark, up to the height of heaven, though his way is through the darkness of a cloud."

Shelley's Atheism, be it remembered, was never disputed during his unpopular days, when men suffered imprisonment for selling his *Queen Mab*. But when it was discerned that the star of a great poet had arisen, he was falsely and impudently dubbed a Christian. Professor Morley is not alone in this crusade of robbery and insult. Mr. Edmund Gosse—a minor poet and critic—in his stupid address at the farcical Shelley celebration at Horsham, since reprinted, said:—

"Those to whom the restraints of religion were hateful marshalled themselves under the banner of the youth who had rashly styled himself an Atheist, forgetful of the fact that all his best writings attest that, whatever name he might call himself, he, more than any other poet of the age, saw God in everything."

These two pious writers ought to have been ashamed to have penned such untruthful nonsense. To defy truth and common sense in such a manner is sufficient to make a bronze statue blush.

But the Great Lying Christian Church will never hesitate to claim Shelley as one of her "lambs." She buried the corpse of the great infidel Darwin in Westminster Abbey. She interred the remains of doubting Thomas Huxley "in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection." She smuggled the dead body of Sir Richard Burton into the church. She laid hold of Prince Jerome Napoleon *in articulo mortis*. She will never rebuke her pious followers for a little "lying for the glory of God, world without end, amen."

MIMNERMUS.

"Jephthah's Daughter."

GIDEON was succeeded by Abimelech, who put his seventy brothers to death; and he was followed by Tola, who ruled for twenty-three years, and added thirty male children, and God knows how many female children, to the population. When Tola died the Jews indulged in a perfect carnival of idolatry. They worshipped the gods of all their neighbors with the utmost impartiality, which so provoked the Lord that he let the Philistines and the Ammonites oppress them until they repented, when he raised them up a deliverer in Jephthah the Gileadite. This worthy was the son of a harlot, and, being driven from his father's house by the legitimate children, he had taken to the life of a freebooter. But he was elected chief by the elders of Gilead when they resolved on war with Ammon. Before going out to battle, "the spirit of the Lord" being upon him, he vowed that if he returned victorious he would offer whomsoever came out of his own house to meet him as a burnt offering. The Ammonites were smitten with immense slaughter, and Jephthah returned to Mizpeh, where his daughter, who was ignorant of his vow, came out to meet him with dance and song. The pious father was very sorry, for "she was his only child"; but he kept his promise to God, and, after allowing the unfortunate girl two months to bewail her virginity, he "did with her according to his vow."

Ordinary Christians shrink from the literal horror of this story, and welcome every attempt of modern commentators to explain it by the subterfuges of a later faith. But a slight acquaintance with ancient creeds

would diminish their surprise. Human sacrifice is almost invariably found in certain stages of religious culture. No matter where we turn—to Phœnicia, Carthage, Assyria, Arabia, Gaul, Rome, Greece, India, Mexico, or Peru—this dark and bloody rite has prevailed; and it has been found in recent times among various African tribes, in the South Pacific Islands, and among the Mongols and the American Indians. All the great Semitic gods, from Moloch downwards, were ravenous for human victims, and there is nothing overstrained in the terrific thirteenth chapter of Flaubert's *Salammbô*. Nor was the God of Israel an exception to the rule. "There is, indeed," says Professor Soury, "no doubt that human victims were offered to Jahveh" in primitive times. Like Moloch, Jahveh claims his first-born. "The first born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me," he says, "for all the first born are mine." And Jephthah's fulfilment of his vow was in accord with the text in Leviticus (xxvii. 28-29), which declares that both beast and man devoted to the Lord shall not be redeemed, but "shall surely be put to death."

Not until the twelfth century of our era, when Rabbi Kimchi wrote on the subject, was there any attempt to dispute the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter. Josephus distinctly says "he sacrificed his daughter as a burnt offering." St. Ambrose deplores Jephthah's cruelty; St. Jerome says that God permitted the sacrifice to punish the imprudent father for such a rash vow; St. Chrysostom expresses a similar opinion, which was also adopted by Justin Martyr and Theodoret; and the great St. Thomas, while censuring Jephthah's rashness, acknowledges that the faith and devotion which inclined him to make this vow proceeded from God.

Rabbi Kimchi proposed to read, "it shall be consecrated to the Lord if it be not fit for a burnt offering," or "it shall be offered for a burnt offering, if fit for it." Simon Patrick followed this line, but confessed that the stream of interpreters ran in the contrary way. Adam Clarke takes the same position, but he supports it with *a priori* reasons of no weight against the text, which, as Luther says in his marginal note, "stands there clear." Our Authorised Version shows "a distinct disposition to tone down the meaning of the original," says the Rev. Dr. Wright, who alleges that the Hebrew "*whosoever* goeth out from the doors of my house" expressly refers to a person, and not to an animal. This agrees with Calmet, who says: "Observe, he does not say the first *thing*, or the first *animal*, but the first *person*." This great Catholic commentator adds that "I will offer him up as a burnt offering to the Lord, *eum holocaustum offeram Domino*," is the true meaning of the text, and they pervert it who say she was redeemed. Exactly the same view is expressed in the latest English commentary, edited by Canon Cook. The original Hebrew, we are told, means *whosoever*, and "these words prove conclusively that Jephthah intended his vow to apply to human beings, not animals"; the same writer adding, still more strongly, that the words "preclude any other meaning than that Jephthah contemplated a human sacrifice."

The words "and she knew no man," which end the story of Jephthah's vow, have induced some apologists to pretend that his daughter was not burnt, but devoted to perpetual virginity. The words, however, stand in our Revised Version "and she had not known man"; that is, says the Speaker's Commentary, "in the mind of the writer her virginity was an aggravation of her cruel fate." Besides, as Milman observes, "it is certain that vows of celibacy were totally unknown among the Hebrews, and belong to a different stage of society. Another objection of Michaelis is fatal to these views. The daughter could not be consecrated to the service of the high priest, for the high priest and the ark were then at Shiloh, in the territory of Ephraim, with whom Jephthah was at deadly war." Well might Bishop Warburton exclaim: "Solutions like these expose sacred scripture to the scorn and derision of unbelievers."

There cannot be a reasonable doubt that Jephthah's daughter was sacrificed as a burnt offering to the Lord. But the question remains, Did the Lord accept the present and sanction the sacrifice? First, let it be noted that "the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah" before he made his fatal vow; nor is there any sign that the holy spirit deserted him before its completion. Next,

there is absolutely no censure of Jephthah's conduct in any part of the Bible. Lastly, he is mentioned by Paul as a worker of righteousness through faith. Jephthah's vow did not, therefore, displease the Lord, who continued to speak through prophets and apostles for more than a thousand years without expressing the slightest disapprobation; and even when he distinctly praised Jephthah through the inspired pen of St. Paul, he neglected to mix any censure with his panegyric.

Jephthah's vow was not without a parallel among pagan nations. Agamemnon, who led the Greeks in the war against Troy, immolated his daughter Iphigenia to appease the gods, and procure favorable winds for the fleet which was detained at Aulis. According to the Greek legend, Iphigenia's innocence excited the compassion of Diana, on whose altar she was to be sacrificed; and when the knife was descending into her devoted bosom the goddess miraculously snatched her away, and substituted a handsome goat for the maiden. This escape, however, is probably later than the original story of her immolation. Like the modern theories of the escape of Jephthah's daughter, it was the product of an age which had grown ashamed of the brutalities of primitive faith, and learnt to substitute animals for human victims on the altars of the gods.

—From "*Bible Heroes*," by G. W. FOOTE.

Correspondence.

SECULARISM AND MARRIAGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your leader on "The Morals of the Primitive Christians" prompts me to ask you kindly to explain clearly an "object" of the Secular Society, as set forth in your issue of last week. It runs thus, and appears to me rather vague: "To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens."

Be good enough to say whether the Secular Society would wish a man and woman to be authorised to engage to live together as husband and wife for a limited period, such as a month or six months, if such a "civil contract" recommended itself to the "judgment and determination" of the parties concerned? Or, under the same circumstances, would it permit a man to have more wives than one, or a woman to have more husbands than one? If not, why not?

As I write for information, and have no wish to enter on a matrimonial controversy, I hope you will be good enough (as before) to insert this short letter, and reply to my inquiries.

(REV.) HENRY J. ALCOCK, M.A.

[We find it difficult to believe that Mr. Alcock can be quite as honestly stupid as he appears to be on the face of his letter. Clearly, to any man of plain common sense, the "judgment" and "determination" apply to the "religious sanctions" of marriage—not to marriage itself. In other words, the State in England should do as it does in France and other countries; make *civil* marriage compulsory, and let married couples add the *religious* ceremony, or omit it, just as they please. Whether men and women are married in the sight of God is a matter between themselves and God—or the Church, if they choose. All the State is concerned with is whether they are married in the sight of society. The Secular Society is not called upon to discuss any other question relating to the marriage institution. It merely stands by the distinctive principle that religion—whether in relation to marriage or in relation to anything else—is a purely personal matter; while civil contracts, on the other hand, are obviously social matters, and require social machinery to enforce them if necessary. For the rest, we are not aware that any Secular organisation ever advocated either polygamy or polyandry; and taking a wife for a month on trial is one of those barbaric ideas which, while they naturally occur in an old oriental book like the Bible, are quite out of harmony with modern, or even ancient, principles of civilisation.—EDITOR.]

Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing him against 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. Miss Vance 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, "The Riddle of the Universe."

ALDGATE PUBLIC BATHS (Goulston-street): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Use of Religion."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Brandon Medland, "A Continental Ramble." With animated photos, including the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, H. Spence, "Courage."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell-road): 11.15, Discussion—"Secular Education *versus* the Compromise"; 7, Professor Earl Barnes, "Church Control of Education."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Victory," Newnham-street, Queen's-street, Edgware-road): November 20, at 9, Business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30 and 7, A lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey and George Hewitt, "The School Board Elections."

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall, 69 York-street): A lecture.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH: 11 and 3 (Bull Ring), H. P. Ward; 7, (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street), H. P. Ward, November 19, at 8 (Bristol-street Board Schools), H. P. Ward, "Priestcraft and Education." November 20, at 8 (Bull Ring), H. P. Ward—weather permitting.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, R. P. Edwards, "The Heathen Chinese."

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner—12, "Famines in India"; 6.30, "Paganism, Christianity, and Atheism."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, Harry Snell, "Mazzini: Patriot and Prophet."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. J. Parr, "Spiritualism: Its Witness and its Facts."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Impromptu Social Evening.

NEWCASTLE (Westminster Hall, Picton-place): 7, Discussion between Messrs. J. Boyce and J. Reed on "Which has the Better Influence on Conduct: Secularism or Christianity?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—November 18, Aldgate Public Baths; 26, Wellington Hall, Islington.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall-Heath, Birmingham.—November 18, Birmingham. 25, Sheffield. 26 and 27, Debate at Sheffield. December 9, Manchester; 10 and 11, Debate at Manchester.

THE BEST BOOK

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

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

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

In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

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

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

Orders should be sent to the author,

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

Thwaites' Liver Pills.

The Best Family Medicine in the World. Will cure Liver, Kidney, and all Stomach Diseases effectually.

Good for Heart Troubles and Cardiac Complaints, Female Ailments, Anæmia, etc. 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. per box. Post free, 14 or 33 stamps. Directions with each box.

G. THWAITES, Herbalist, Stockton-on-Tees.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Crimes of Christianity. By G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authors. An unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

The Jewish Life of Christ. Being the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. Edited, with an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes, by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. 6d.; superior edition, superfine paper, cloth, 1s.

Letters to the Clergy. By G. W. Foote. Subjects:—Creation—The Believing Thief on the Cross—The Atonement—Old Testament Morality—Inspiration—Credentials of the Gospel—Miracles—Prayer. 128 pp., 1s.

Flowers of Freethought. (First Series.) By G. W. Foote. Fifty-one essays on a variety of Freethought topics. 214 pp., cloth, 2s. 6d.

Flowers of Freethought. (Second Series.) By G. W. Foote. Fifty-eight essays on a further variety of Freethought topics. 302 pp., cloth, 2s. 6d.—These two volumes of *Flowers* form together a complete Garden of Freethought. Every aspect of Reason and Faith is treated somewhere, and always in a popular style. Contains much of the author's best writing.

John Morley as a Freethinker. By G. W. Foote. Valuable references to Mr. Morley's writings. Good for Freethinkers to read first, and then lend to their Christian friends. 2d.

Is Socialism Sound? Four Nights' Public Debate between G. W. Foote and Annie Besant. Verbatim, and revised by both disputants. 1s.; superior edition in cloth, 2s.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's Play, showing its gross partiality and its ridiculous historic inaccuracy, with special reference to the (probably) forged passage in Tacitus and the alleged Neronian massacre of Christians. Handsomely printed, 6d.

The Birth of Christ. From the original *Life of Jesus* by the famous Strauss. With an introduction by G. W. Foote. A most thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand. 6d.

Christianity and Secularism. Public Debate between G. W. Foote and Rev. Dr. McCann. Verbatim Report, revised by both disputants. 1s.; superior edition in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. From Adam to Paul. By G. W. Foote. Instructive, interesting, amusing and honest; in fact, the only honest book on the subject. 200 pp., cloth, 2s. 6d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Grand Old Man. By G. W. Foote. An Exhaustive Answer to Mr. Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. 1s.; cloth edition, 1s. 6d.

Will Christ Save Us? By G. W. Foote. An Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. Contains much Historic Information on Slavery, the Position of Woman, General Social Progress, and the advance of Science and Freethought in opposition to Christian bigotry. 6d.

Darwin on God. By G. W. Foote. A full and minute account of Darwin's mental development, with a brief Memoir of his grandfather, the famous Erasmus Darwin; containing all the passages in Darwin's works, and in his *Life and Letters*, bearing directly or indirectly on the subject of religion. Every Freethinker should have, and keep, a copy of this important little volume. 6d.; cloth, 1s.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. By G. W. Foote. Written directly after Bradlaugh's death, and containing personal anecdotes and characteristics not to be found elsewhere. Necessary to those who want to know the real Bradlaugh.

The Shadow of the Sword. A Moral and Statistical Essay on War. By G. W. Foote. Christian papers have called it "powerful" and "masterly." 2d

Infidel Death-Beds. By G. W. Foote. Second edition, revised and much enlarged. Contains authentic details of the last hours of sixty-two historic Freethinkers, and in most cases a sketch of their lives. Precise references given in every instance. 8d.; cloth, 1s. 3d.

Comic Sermons and other Fantasias. By G. W. Foote. A selection of the author's best satirical writings. Contents:—A Sermon on Summer—A Mad Sermon—A Sermon on Sin—A Bishop on the Workhouse—A Christmas Sermon—Christmas Eve in Heaven—Bishop Trimmer's Sunday Diary—The Judge and the Devil—Satan and Michael—The First Christmas—Adam's Breeches—The Fall of Eve—Joshua and Jericho—A Baby God—Judas Iscariot. 8d.

Theism or Atheism. Public Debate between G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee. Verbatim Report, revised by both Disputants. Well printed and neatly bound, 1s.

Bible and Beer. By G. W. Foote. Showing the Absurdity of basing Teetotalism on the Christian Scriptures. Careful, thorough, and accurate. Freethinkers should keep this pamphlet by them. 4d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. By G. W. Foote. 2d.

Open Letters to Jesus Christ. By G. W. Foote. Racy as well as Argumentative. Something Unique. 4d.

Philosophy of Secularism. By G. W. Foote. 3d.

The Bible God. A Scathing Criticism. By G. W. Foote. 2d.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited,
1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

In stout paper covers, 1s.; cloth, 2s.

THE BOOK OF GOD

In the Light of the Higher Criticism.

With Special Reference to DEAN FARRAR's *New Apology*.

By G. W. FOOTE.

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

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited,
1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

A New Edition

OF

INGERSOLL'S

"MISTAKES OF MOSES."

Handsomely printed on good paper and bound in stiff paper covers.

Price One Shilling.

Also an Edition de Luxe

Printed on Superfine Paper and Elegantly Bound in Cloth.

Price Half-a-Crown.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited,
1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

NOW READY,

Photographs of Mr. G. W. FOOTE,

President N. S. S., Editor of *Freethinker*.

These are excellent portraits, and the proceeds of the sales (by the kindness of Mr. Geo. Cross, Photographer, Southport) will be handed to the Twentieth Century Fund. Cabinets 1s., postage 1d.

Larger size, 12 by 10, when mounted, 2s. 6d., postage 2d. Order from Miss Vance, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

PHOTOGRAPHY. Good Work only.

Every description of Photographs copied same size, reduced, or enlarged. Cartes-de-Visite, 12, 3s. 6d.; Cabinets, 6, 4s.; 12, 7s. 6d. Larger sizes at proportionate rates. Send 1s., with photograph, for sample sheet of 12 midgets.

Developing, Printing, etc., for Amateurs.

GEO. CROSS, M.N.S.S., The Studio, 15 Cambridge Arcade, Southport.

CHEAP FRESH FISH.

For the convenience of small consumers, we will send readers of this journal 8lbs. of nicely assorted fresh Fish for 2s. 6d., or 12lbs. for 3s. 6d., carefully packed and carriage paid. Trusting to receive a fair measure of support, we are,

GRAINGER & WITTERING, Fish Docks, Grimsby.

Works by the late R. G. Ingersoll.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| THE HOUSE OF DEATH. Funeral Orations and Addresses. 1s. | LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d. |
| MISTAKES OF MOSES. 1s. | GOD AND THE STATE. 2d. |
| THE DEVIL. 6d. | WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d. |
| SUPERSTITION. 6d. | WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d. |
| SHAKESPEARE. 6d. | FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d. |
| THE GODS. 6d. | GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d. |
| THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d. | THE DYING CREED. 2d. |
| REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 4d. | THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION. A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d. |
| ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d. | HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d. |
| CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d. | ART AND MORALITY. 2d. |
| ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d. | DO I BLASPHEME? 2d. |
| ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d. | SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d. |
| ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d. | MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d. |
| PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d. | SKULLS. 2d. |
| HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d. | THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d. |
| ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d. | LIVE TOPICS. 1d. |
| THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d. | MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d. |
| LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d. | REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d. |
| WHAT IS RELIGION? 2d. | REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d. |
| IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d. | CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d. |
| | CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. 1d. |

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited,
1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

NO. 8.

- 1 Pair pure wool Blankets
- 1 Pair large Bed-sheets
- 1 Beautiful Quilt
- 1 Lady's Jacket (ready for immediate wear)
- 1 Gent's Watch

The Lot for 21s.

NO. 9.

- 1 Dress Length, any color
- 1 Lady's Umbrella
- 1 Pair Boots
- 1 Fur Necktie
- 1 Lady's Jacket (ready for immediate wear)
- 1 Gent's Watch

The Lot for 21s.

We want you to talk about us.

We made a contract for the purchase of 2,000 Gent's Centre Second Chronograph Watches. We want to have 2,000 people talking about our business, and to make them do it we are putting a watch into each of these four parcels absolutely free of all cost.

These Bargains will make you talk about us.

1 Gent's Lounge Suit

Stock Size, in Black, Blue, Brown, Grey, or the New Green. Give chest over vest and inside leg measures, also your height.

1 Gent's Watch

The Lot for 21s.

1 Gent's single or double breasted Irish Frieze Overcoat

In Black, Blue, Brown, or Grey. Give chest over vest measure and your height. Also

1 Gent's Watch

The Lot for 21s.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union-street, Bradford.

VEGETARIAN, Health Foods, Drinks, and other Household Goods. Vegetarian, Temperance, Advanced Thought, Humane, and Dress Reform Literature. Send stamp for price list.

J. O. BATES, Vegetarian Stores, Victoria-street Gloucester.

(Mention the *Freethinker*.)

CARETAKER, TIMEKEEPER, WATCHMAN, or any position of trust, wanted by a Freethinker (married). Drive repair, garden, etc. Capable and reliable. Good references.—BERT, 78 St. Peter's-street, Islington, N.

Nearly Ready.
THE SECULAR ALMANACK
 FOR 1901.

Edited by G. W. FOOTE

AND

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

CONTAINING

A Calendar, Full Information About Freethought Societies at Home and Abroad, and Special Articles by G. W. Foote, C. Watts, C. Cohen, A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, "Chilperic," and "Mimnermus," etc., etc.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., LTD., 1 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, LONDON, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK
 FOR
FREETHINKERS AND INQUIRING CHRISTIANS.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE and W. P. BALL.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED, AND HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

CONTENTS :

Part I.—Bible Contradictions. Part II.—Bible Absurdities. Part III.—Bible Atrocities.
 Part IV.—Bible Immoralities, Indecencies, Obscenities, Broken Promises, and Unfulfilled Prophecies.

Cheap Edition, in paper covers, 1s. 6d.; Best Edition, bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., LTD., 1 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, LONDON, E.C.

BIBLE ROMANCES.

By G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS :

The Creation Story.	The Tower of Babel.	Balaam's Ass.	A Virgin Mother.
Eve and the Apple.	Lot's Wife.	God in a Box.	The Resurrection.
Cain and Abel.	The Ten Plagues.	Jonah and the Whale.	The Crucifixion.
Noah's Flood.	The Wandering Jews.	Bible Animals.	John's Nightmare.

THE SECOND (REVISED) EDITION COMPLETE.

160 Pages.

Bound in Cloth.

Price Two Shillings.

Free by Post at the Published Price.

"The neat little volume before us, which ought to be read by everyone desirous of the truth in such matters. Mr. Foote's style is always bright, and the topics dealt with are of a nature to awaken interest even in the duldest mind."—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., LTD., 1 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, LONDON, E.C.

Printed and Published by THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, London, E.C.