

THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

Vol. XXII.—No. 20.

SUNDAY, MAY 18, 1902.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

*O foolish mortals! always taught in vain!
O glorious laurel! since for one sole leay
Of thine imaginary deathless tree,
Of blood and tears must flow the unebbing sea.*

—BYRON.

Dan Leno and the "Freethinker."

A LETTER was delivered at our publishing office addressed to "The Editor of the Freethinker newspaper." Simply that and nothing more. But this journal is fairly well known, and the letter reached us without any immoderate delay. The envelope bore on the reverse side the monogram "D. L." On opening it we found a communication inside from the great Dan Leno. It occurred to us on seeing his signature that he might have been reading the *Freethinker* with profit, that he had found perhaps in its columns a few suggestions for "points" on the music-hall stage, and that he was possibly writing us a letter of thanks and encouragement. Imagine our surprise, then, at the very opposite tenor of his communication. It ran as follows:—

Springfield House,
Atkins Road,
Clapham Park, S.W.
May 7th.

[Dan was careless of the year.]

To the Editor,—

I read in your paper, April 27th, a disgusting article on my name. I must therefore ask you to apologise in your next issue; also forward me a copy of the apology; if not I shall be compelled to put you to further trouble.

DAN LENO.

We have slightly edited this epistle. Dan Leno's strong point is not orthography or punctuation. He has other and more valuable merits, which have brought him into personal acquaintance with the King, besides enabling him to earn a Prime Minister's income. Such a man needs not trouble about the accomplishments of a schoolboy.

Our reply to Dan Leno's letter was as follows:—

"The Freethinker,"
2 Newcastle Street,
Farringdon Street,
London, E.C.
May 9, 1902.

SIR,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 7th inst. The current number of the *Freethinker*, though dated for next Sunday, was prepared for the press (as usual) on Tuesday evening and printed on Wednesday morning.

As I understand from your letter that you desire me to deal with the matter of your complaint publicly, I must perforce wait for the next issue, a copy of which shall be sent you in due course.

Meanwhile I have the honor to remain

Yours obdly,
Mr. Dan Leno, G. W. FOOTE.

Now we did not exactly edit the *Freethinker* dated April 27, although we contributed a good deal to it. Mr. Cohen was then seeing the paper through the press.
No. 1,116.

We state this merely as a matter of fact. It is not our wish to evade any sort of responsibility. On the contrary, we say that this particular number of the *Freethinker* was well edited, and that we see absolutely nothing in the "article" referred to by Dan Leno which he of all men need call "disgusting." We may add that, if he really finds it so, his sense of humor is more limited than we imagined.

One of our contributors, who signs himself "Ess Jay Bee," wrote some verses entitled "'And They Sung a New Song'; or, Dan Leno in Heaven." We presume this is the "article" complained of. Now there can hardly be anything objectionable in the title of this *jeu d'esprit*. Surely we should not be called upon to apologise for giving publicity to the supposition that Dan Leno was in heaven. If he has an unconquerable objection to the locality we are willing to express our regret for allowing him to be placed there, even in imagination. Nor can there be anything objectionable in "A New Song." It is what every music-hall artist is after. As for Dan Leno's name, it is a kind of public property; he is not accustomed to deprecate free advertisements, and we did not suppose we were to be blamed for giving him one. Certainly our poet did not embody in his verses a low view of Dan Leno's talents as a public entertainer. He related a dream, in which he was in heaven, and the place was anything but amusing. But the advent of Dan Leno, who happened to knock at the gate, and was let in by Peter, changed the whole scene. His comic songs set the company in a roar of laughter. Hymns were given up for ever, and they all sang "He's a jolly good fellow." "Now this is heaven," our poet said—when he tumbled out of bed and found he had been dreaming.

Dan Leno never had such a handsome compliment paid him before. We are sorry he takes it so badly.

We do not pretend that our poet's effort was quite worthy of Shakespeare. But we venture to say it had more wit and point than most of the songs that even Dan Leno sings on the music-hall stage. Compared with some songs we have had the misfortune to hear it may be called magnificent.

Dan Leno considers our poet's verses "disgusting." Well, that is an adjective which admits of infinite discussion. It is a matter of taste, after all; and Dan Leno may not be an infallible judge in such matters. With regard to the use of his name, are we guilty of taking it in vain? We hope not. No harm, and most assuredly no insult, was intended. Our poet meant to be complimentary. But it seems that he failed. Perhaps he failed because he paid his compliment through the wrong channel.

For our own part, since he demands it, we beg to apologise to Dan Leno for using his name in the *Freethinker*. We seem to have been guilty of something like blasphemy, and we repent in sackcloth and ashes. We ought to have remembered that he has played before the King. But whether Dan Leno forgives us or not, we hope he will turn an eye of compassion on our poor contributor. A professional should not be too hard on an amateur. We admit the giddy eminence of Dan Leno. Our comic man looked up to him with a sort of reverence. But the god disdains the buzzing flattery of the insect at his feet. Yet why resent it? Why treat it as an insult? Why call it disgusting? We appeal to the angry deity to be merciful. Shakespeare says that mercy is mightiest in the mightiest. He must have had his mind's eye on this affair—and Dan Leno.

G. W. FOOTE.

Clerics and the Coronation.

WITH much unction an evangelical newspaper, in an editorial on the coming Coronation, observes: "We hope the mind of the nation will fasten on the Scriptural portions of the service, and the impressive prayers and exhortations it contains." Freethinkers hope so, too; but they hope also that the "mind of the nation" will not merely fasten on the more or less familiar phraseology used, and remain content with the general impression that it seems appropriate and good. We hope that the national intelligence will endeavor to grasp the underlying meaning, and will analyse it in the light of reason, setting aside, as far as possible, any predilection or bias which may be induced by religious training or an adherence to theological creeds. An examination of the Scriptural portions of the service, carried out on these lines, is scarcely calculated to leave the favorable impression which is apparently expected by the writer of the editorial referred to. On the contrary, the idea likely to be evolved is that the "impressive prayers and exhortations," and the religious part of the ceremonial generally, is a jumble of archaic nonsense and grotesque performances, not at all creditable to the enlightenment of the twentieth century. The Archbishop of Canterbury, we are told, has been at some pains to curtail the long and, as we should think, wearisome ceremonial; but, whatever he may have done in that direction, he has allowed too much to remain. Reasons of ecclesiastical policy and pride have prevailed, and he has failed to eliminate a vast amount that might well have been dispensed with.

No doubt it will be a great field-day for the clerics of the Established Church; the spiritual hierarchy will spread themselves out with all the pomp and parade of their "holy office" and position in the State; the occasion is one of infrequent occurrence, and likely to evoke interest far and near. Perhaps, after all, it is expecting too much from human nature—even human nature supposed to be subdued by pious humility—to look for any but the fullest realisation of such an opportunity for display. It is evident that if we had entertained any idea that the clergy, as represented by the Archbishops and the Bishops, would have done anything in the way of modestly minimising their own importance, we should have been sadly disappointed. Precedent pleads on their behalf, and so it happens that two representatives of a Church which calls itself the Church of England, but in reality is only a Church *in* England, will figure with more prominence than all others who are present, except the King and Queen themselves, in a ceremonial act affecting the whole Empire with all its inhabitants of divergent race and creed. The coming Coronation is an object-lesson in the arrogant assumption of authority and power by the priestly caste in this country as well as others, and in this age as from almost the earliest times. History too eloquently exposes the evils from which nations have suffered at the hands of priestly domination in the past for any real friend of humanity to regard with composure its reappearance even in its most amiable modern guise, and with the insinuating apology of immemorial custom.

The Church of England priests will have the conducting of the religious part of the ceremony all to themselves. One clergyman of the Episcopal Church in Scotland has published a book in which he maintains that members of the Free Churches have no right even to be present or to join in the service! A beautiful spirit of exclusiveness which may be commended to the attention of Nonconformist "brethren in Christ." Dr. Temple, as the highest dignitary of the favored Church, may be expected to fulfil his duties in the consecration ceremony with ease, if not with grace. He has a certain hardness of composition which would preserve him from being overawed by the task of anointing and crowning half a dozen kings, if the need for doing so arose.

The presentation of the Bible is, we learn, to be accompanied by the following amazing words: "Our gracious King; we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; This is the Royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God." Is it possible to imagine a declaration more extravagantly absurd and utterly false?

What cool assurance or purblind ignorance must be necessary to its utterance? Can we believe that even Dr. Temple will solemnly commit himself to that statement without mental reservation, or that his hearers, even including the bishops, can receive it without an imperceptible smile? It calmly ignores everything that has been ascertained beyond dispute about these "lively Oracles of God"—all the conclusions which have been established during centuries of criticism, and more particularly in these latter days. The "most valuable thing that this world affords," forsooth! Let us put this to a simple test. Suppose King Edward could only have one of two things—the Crown (and all that it represents) or the Bible? Which would he select? What store will he set by it, except in a formal and verbal kind of way, when he has received this "most valuable thing that the world affords"? There is no evidence that he has hitherto devoted himself with unremitting application to the study and assimilation of its contents, that he has made it his constant daily companion and the subject of incessant meditation and prayer. This, and scarcely less, we might expect if, indeed, he regarded it as the "most valuable thing that this world affords." But it is open to conjecture whether he has ever read this precious volume straight through, or is ever likely to do so. We might, at any rate, say with a reasonable approach to certainty that a number of those who will be present in Westminster Abbey, and will seem to give a pious assent to the Primate's declaration, have not done so. The "lively Oracles of God" have not been sufficiently lively to induce them to undertake, or to carry out if they have undertaken, that test of their real regard for the book. As a matter of fact, it may be assumed King Edward will take the book because it appears to be a necessary accompaniment of the Crown, and he will give it about the same kind of reverent appreciation which is accorded to the Bible by the vast majority of his subjects—*i.e.*, he will look with pious affection on its covers, swear by it and on it, promote the circulation of copies of it as the "secret of England's greatness," and do everything but devote himself sedulously to its study or to the obeying of precepts which occasionally to his surprise he may learn that it contains. If the "thumping story" which the Primate will have to tell about it should by any possibility strike him as being a trifle too strong, he may console himself with the reflection that it is Dr. Temple, and not he, who has the hardihood to tell it.

After the King has been adjured to "observe the commandments of God," which inferentially he is to learn from his faithful bishops and clergy, and is invited to "fight the good fight of faith," which faith is that of the Established Church, and is promised, if he is a good and obedient King, he will receive "a crown of Righteousness" hereafter—which, of course, is more of a pious wish than a known certainty—the King is anointed and crowned. The anointing is a rite which has the merit—if it is a merit—of great antiquity, though it has its ludicrous aspects when performed in this matter-of-fact day. Its virtue may be inferred from the fact that all the weak and the wicked amongst the monarchs which this nation, in the course of its history, has had since the institution of the rite have been duly anointed and solemnly blessed by the leading men of God of their time.

Yes, it will be a great day for the clerics of this Christian land, and small wonder it is that they are looking forward to it with an agreeable flutter of pride and expectancy.

FRANCIS. NEALE.

Bret Harte.

"Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power."—WHITMAN.

JOHN FORSTER, in his *Life of Dickens*, testifies to the delight with which the great English novelist greeted Bret Harte's earlier sketches of mining life. And readers of Bret Harte's verse will not forget the poem, *Dickens in Camp*, relating how a digger reads aloud to his fellows—

The book wherein the Master
Had writ of Little Nell.

Bret Harte possessed Dickens's secret of getting home to the heart of those who read him. He told a plain

tale, his pathos was simple and direct, and it was kept even more skilfully than Dickens kept it, within just limits. He never "wallowed naked in the pathetic," to use one of Stevenson's phrases. His sterling humor gained him readers by thousands. Unquestionably his most perfect story is *The Luck of Roaring Camp*. It stands alone. Though it is now nearly forty years old, there is nothing which quite equals it. It is one of the few examples in English of a short story which approaches perfection. *The Outcasts of Poker Flat* is as popular, but hardly displays the same consummate art.

Bret Harte's work had always a peculiar flavor of its own, the bouquet of the pine-woods of California, the atmosphere of the sun-scorched and wind-swept Sierras. Racy of the soil, it gave the reader a wonderful series of word-pictures of that strange life of the Wild West in the age of the gold rush. It painted the strange life of hazard and adventure in which the flotsam and jetsam of humanity elbowed each other, while the old-world civilisation which Spain had left behind her imported an element of the romantic which heightened the contrast between the living, vibrating present and the stagnant, dying past.

Doubtless, in critical mood, we are inclined to think Bret Harte's heroes and heroines, loveable though they be, as impossible as the "blessed damozels" who haunt the stained glass of churches. Yet, on first intimacy, we forbore to question the reality of Bret Harte's angelic blackguards, who have been made immortal within the compass of a few pages.

Like Maupassant, he painted on small canvasses, and, like the distinguished French writer, he presented us with infinite riches in a little room. The first twenty years of his literary output would hardly bulk more than *Lorna Doone*, yet, like Maupassant, he was wise in his generation.

By rare artifice, so easy in its apparent spontaneity that we only gauge its art by analysis long after, Bret Harte brings the New World to our senses in a way as perfect in its simplicity as the Greeks themselves achieved. Take those few lines, for example, that open *In the Carquinez Woods*. The light, the color, the very order and sound of the forest primeval surround us. We seem not to be reading, but to have passed into the very scene itself. The supreme art of the story is not only in its description, but in the dramatic unity which is carefully preserved. From the first page until the holocaust destroys the chief actors and their environment in one awful tragedy, we feel the aroma of the "dry, fragrant dust of their bark-strewn floor," and "the silence, the solitude of a forgotten past." Realism and romance kiss within the covers of his books. But this admixture of new ideas in forms consecrated by tradition is always a surprise. In *Cressy*, from the moment the door of the little school-house opens, the humorous progress of its hero across that mean apartment is an epitome of the whole book. As the chorus greet him immediately, so, in the last sentence, they bid him farewell with their immortal words of fate: "Why, we knowed it all along, sir!" This adaptation of new details to old shapes is harmful to neither. With reticent power and quiet, every-day expression, Bret Harte worked his wonderful adventure as smoothly as Mr. Henry James describes nothing in particular. In both authors we are conscious of dexterity and exact precision of touch. But the form is concealed so cleverly, whether in *Cressy*, *Wan Lee the Pagan*, or dozens of other instances. Bret Harte's heroines are so bewitching that one dares say no word in praise of their alluring charms. To recall M'liss, Minty, Cressy, Flip, and their sisters, is to think of sirens who would have overcome St. Anthony himself.

The boys are no whit less delightfully sketched. Rupe, Johnnie, Richelieu, Bob, and the rest of the fascinating imps, are of the same breed as Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. We can give no higher praise. What adventures have not these wayward youths tempted us to indulge? Our moral code, no less than our insular etiquette, vanishes at their bidding. We forget our middle-aged stolidity, and plunge into excesses of irrepressible fun.

The less definite heroes—the "luck" of Roaring Camp, Baby Sylvester, and Wan Lee—have equal powers to attract us. The superlative excellence of Bret Harte's fiction accounts, perhaps, for the com-

parative apathy bestowed upon his poems. His verse has never, at least in this country, been sufficiently esteemed. In that verse, with so many tunes, he has touched the delicate melody of the pathos of childhood without bathos. *The Heathen Chinee* yet remains unique in his humor; the *Society upon the Stanislaus* is part of our common speech; the rude vigor of *Jim* is still unrivalled by its countless imitators. This is not the time to discuss Bret Harte's ultimate place in literature. Nor do we care a straw whether he is a type of the genius of the New World. We have never read a book of his which has not moved us to admiration. To discover how much choice of subject and novelty of incident has prejudiced us in his favor is not worth trying. "Nature's infinite book" is open to all, and if a Bret Harte in the West, or now a Rudyard Kipling in the East, find themes to move a world to laughter or to tears where others had but found dull material for dreary books of travel, so far from decrying the genius therewith, ought we not to yield him honor for the pleasure he has given to the whole English-speaking world?

MIMNERMUS.

Ethics of Persecution.

I AM constantly favored with communications of various kinds from readers of the *Freethinker*—some wise, some witty, and some neither the one nor the other. Some are laudatory, some disparaging; some severely critical, and some simply ask questions. The following is one of the latter class, and, as it is a question of some little general interest, I have taken this method of answering it. The writer—a lady—is puzzled at the apparent paradox that, while we all admit that actions are partly determined by opinions, and though certain classes of actions are properly suppressed by society in its own interests, yet Freethinkers object, as a matter of principle, to the suppression of opinions that may be honestly believed to be the cause of objectionable or dangerous conduct. She says:—

"You assert that it is wrong to punish a man for the opinions held by him. Many branches of the Christian Church believe differently, and I am inclined to agree with them. Personally, I do not endorse the Christian faith; but I do believe that, if we are convinced that certain opinions will lead to injurious actions, then we are warranted in doing our utmost to suppress those opinions. If a Christian believes that sceptical opinions will ultimately destroy the well-being of society, then he seems logically bound to destroy those opinions; and if a Freethinker believes the same thing of Christian beliefs, he, on the same reasoning, should act in the same manner. Either way, the suppression of opinions that are believed to be evil seems properly justifiable..... Why, then, should you complain of the persecutions of the Christian Churches, seeing that in so doing they were only, according to their lights, protecting society from what they believed to be injurious influences?"

I have placed this objection in the writer's own words, because it is a point often enough raised, and therefore the answer to it may be of some importance to more than one of my readers. The objection *looks* sound enough on the surface. Conduct we believe, to some extent, to be the expression of opinion—myself, I believe not to such a great extent as is commonly supposed—and, as we are forced in pure self-defence to suppress certain actions, while we refrain from suppressing the opinions that lead to them, it would seem as though we were tinkering with effects and leaving the causes untouched. The objection, I repeat, looks a solid one, and yet I believe the answer to it may be found without a great deal of trouble.

In the first place, dealing with the form in which the objection is raised above, I may note that there is some confusion between the suppression of an opinion by physical force or by bribery and the suppression of an opinion by other methods. The *Freethinker* does object to the former, but he does not object to the latter. We are doing what we can to suppress an opinion whenever we write or speak against it, or whenever we modify the environment of people, so that it may react upon their nervous structure, and so produce a modification in their mental habits. This method of suppression we all believe in and we all practise, whether we are conscious of it or not. It is the suppression or creation

—for one can create opinion as well as suppress it—by force or bribery that the Freethinker objects to, and he bases his objection upon the broad ground that it is far more injurious to the health of the body politic than allowing the most monstrous opinions to flourish with the rankest luxuriance.

Of course, to be strictly accurate, you cannot directly suppress an opinion by either force or bribery; you can only drive it below the surface, when, as Mill pointed out, it is very apt to become of the nature of a prejudice. No amount of force can alter my opinion on any subject under the sun. Ideas and opinions are not generated consciously or dismissed consciously. We are only conscious of their presence or of their absence. But force or bribery may secure the disappearance or creation of an opinion by either atrophy or artificial culture. An opinion which is not nourished by constant reflection or expression is apt to grow "flabby" or disappear, just as the constant expression of a belief strengthens not only a kindred belief in others, but, by a species of reaction, in ourselves also. It is in this way that ideas and beliefs resting upon strong foundations of fact have died out from time to time, while others, like so many intellectual vagrants, having no visible means of support, have been accepted as unquestionably true.

In the next place, we may feel our way towards a conclusion in this matter, by bearing in mind the general rule that the principal justification for social action of any kind is that it removes more or greater evils than it inflicts. All social action implies a limitation of the comparatively unrestricted action of the individual, and, consequently, its justification must be found in the fact that the restriction of individual liberty must be compensated by a larger social freedom, and the liberties surrendered as an individual are taken up again with interest in that larger social life in which the individual shares.

Tried by this test, religious persecution must be unhesitatingly condemned. It has been evil without a single redeeming quality. The "truth" on behalf of which people have been persecuted has been arbitrarily selected; it has been unverified and unverifiable; there has been no common agreement as to its nature; and it has varied its specific character from generation to generation. And, moreover, it has uniformly failed to achieve its object. It has not secured uniformity of belief, and it has not succeeded in exterminating unbelief. This last has flourished in spite of persecution, while the achievement of the first object has become more and more hopeless with the advance of civilisation.

John Stuart Mill deprecated the forcible suppression of opinion on four grounds. First, he said, the opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. Secondly, even if not wholly true, it may be partly true, and mankind is a loser by its suppression. Thirdly, the conflict of opinion is necessary to breed strenuous conviction. And, fourthly, the meaning of established beliefs is likely to be lost or weakly held if they are never called into question and compelled to defend themselves. These reasons are powerful enough, singly or collectively, but there is a fifth that is more powerful still, and that is the effect of persecution on the character both of the individual and of society. The deaths that may be placed to the credit of religious persecution are numerous and horrible enough, but the evils inflicted on the living are greater still. Not those who are punished by the persecutor, but those who are spared, suffer most. Those who remain are so limited in the expression of their opinion, and in the means at hand of arriving at correct ones; thinking becomes such a costly luxury, and expression of thought even more costly still, that insensibly apathy and hypocrisy eat deep into the national life, and seriously undermine its integrity and its value. One has only to reflect upon the many generations that have come and gone during which freedom of thought and speech was practically nonexistent, upon the fact that these generations were born and trained in an atmosphere that discouraged independence and the assertion of mental individuality, to realise what a paralysing effect this must have had on character. Clearly, if we are to test persecution by the principle laid down above—namely, that it must remove greater evils than it inflicts—it is emphatically and unhesitatingly condemned.

In plain truth we have no right to suppress any

opinion, however absurd, and certainly there is no profit in attempting the task. All that we are justified in doing is to regulate the manner in which opinions may be expressed, and see that the mode of their expression is such that the public safety is not necessarily endangered thereby. We do not attempt to prevent anyone carrying about with them a naked light; but we should object, and rightly object, to their carrying one down a coal mine or through a gunpowder store. And in precisely the same manner, while we have no right to suppress an opinion, we are warranted, in self-defence, in regulating the manner in which that opinion shall be expressed—always, of course, bearing in mind the right of an opinion to gain an expression.

But religious persecution has generally aimed, not at the regulation of conduct as such, nor at the regulation of opinions in such a manner as to prevent, as far as possible, social friction, but to suppress the opinions themselves. It has not been claimed that the opinions of heretics have usually resulted in evil conduct—at least this has not been the grounds of the persecution—but that the mere difference of opinion justified its suppression. In other words, the end aimed at has been mental uniformity, not social order. The latter is indispensable to the well-being of society; the former, on the contrary, is so far from being essential that it might be plausibly argued against as being an evidence of social stagnation or retrogression.

It may be urged, however, that, as a matter of fact, we do to-day persecute opinions, inasmuch as we compel Quakers to pay a war-tax, or, until lately, anti-vaccinators to be inoculated—or, at all events, pay through the rates for a medical officer's fees. And this introduces us to another important distinction between religious and other opinions. Religious opinions have their objective in some other existence. The legitimacy of, say, tyrannicide can be tested by appeals to known facts, and we are dealing with at least definite, even if elusive, data when discussing the relation between vaccination and immunity from small-pox. All of these and kindred opinions may be criticised with the aid of known and knowable facts, and so far we may hope to one day arrive at an agreement upon the point, although we meanwhile agree to abide by the rule of the majority. But, with religious opinions, we are on different grounds altogether. There is no hope of ever arriving at any agreement on matters of religion, save that of rejecting them as useless speculations, and there are certainly no verifiable data to which we can appeal. We cannot by any known means calculate the relation between the belief in the doctrine of the Trinity and the purchasing of eternal felicity, nor can we ever establish any determinate relation between religious beliefs and moral actions. In the former instance, we are concerned with the relations between two known quantities; in the latter, with two things, between which no relation can be established.

The distinction is, then, that we force conduct along certain lines, and in agreement with certain opinions, so long as this conduct is testable by observed results, but that we have no right to coerce opinion as such, particularly when the opinion in question is largely concerned with a subject on which no reliable or verifiable data exist. Or, to put the same thing in another way, the State is not concerned with the existence of opinion, but with the existence of conduct. It cannot, of course, avoid influencing opinion by its operations, but it has no defensible right to coerce opinion on the mere ground that such a difference exists.

It is in this direction that religious theorists have, as I have said, gone astray. These have almost without exception aimed at the suppression of opinion itself, and although this attempt may have been made in perfect good faith, and in the full conviction that certain opinions were disastrous to mankind, yet the fact remains that more harm than good has resulted from their action. It has been the normal result of religious persecution to have manufactured hypocrisy and indifference where it has aimed at creating a lively faith. Independent thinking being a dangerous pastime, and speaking being more so, independence of both thought and speech has been neglected, and in the mental apathy and indolence and hypocrisy of the present we can see the legacy bequeathed to us by the religious past. The

only legitimate weapon against opinion is opinion, and, given a perfectly fair field and an absence of artificial checks, we may safely look for time and experience to correct any errors that we may entertain.

C. COHEN.

The Decalogue and Atheism.—II.

(Conclusion.)

IN my article last week upon the Decalogue some of its defects were pointed out, and the Rev. Dr. Barrett's extravagant claims for its unique ethical value were considered. It is now proposed to notice further the fallacies in which he indulged. For instance, he says: "We shall search in vain for a code of morals like that of the Decalogue." I have already referred to the ethics of Buddha, and indicated wherein in many instances they are superior to the morals of the Ten Commandments. This theological egotism which asserts on behalf of Bible teachings a superiority over all other moral inculcations may be excused in the enthusiastic street preacher, but in a scholar like Dr. Barrett such reckless pleading is really reprehensible. What hope can there be for intellectual discrimination among the masses when their prominent teachers indulge in statements the very opposite of fact? If it were simply a case of the "blind leading the blind," it would call forth pity; but when we find supposed efficient shepherds constantly misleading their flocks, the strongest condemnation is merited.

So far from the morality of the Ten Commandments being unequalled by any other ethical code in its beneficial influence upon human conduct, it may be mentioned that the moral force which marked the characters of the Roman Emperors, Domitian, Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus, and Aurelius, has never been surpassed by any Christian rulers who accepted the Decalogue as a moral basis. It may be also urged with truth that few have had their names recorded in the book of history whose lives and characters can afford, in the perusal, more deep gratification to the benevolent and virtuous inquirer; few more worthy of our admiration and our imitation than those of Socrates, Plato, Euclid of Megara, Epictetus, and many others whose conduct was in no way affected by the Jewish Commandments. Even Dean Farrar was candid enough to write:—

"We know that there were those among the heathen whose virtues and charity, in spite of their dim and imperfect knowledge, might put many a Christian to the blush.....With all our knowledge and enlightenment we fall far short of some of them; we are less stern with our faults, less watchful, less self-denying, less tender to one another. We ought to have attained to far loftier moral attitudes than they, but we have not. Let us admit with shame and sorrow that some among these heathens showed themselves to be nobler, loftier, holier, freer from vanity, freer from meanness, freer from special pleading, freer from falsehood, more spirited, more reasonable, on some points even more enlightened, than many among ourselves. The very ideal of the Christian life seems to have been dwarfed to a poor and vulgar and conventional standard."

Dr. Barrett says: "No one who is religious without morality is a good man, no man who is moral without being religious is a good man..... Religion and ethics are indissolubly connected, and religion in the long run will be found to be as necessary to ethics as the soil and the roots of the tree are to the fruit it bears." It seems almost incredible that an intelligent public teacher should, in the twentieth century, give utterance to such palpable errors as these. To say, as he does, that "no man who is moral without being religious is a good man" is as false as it is insulting to thousands of men who have no religion, but whose characters can be favorably compared with that of any Christian minister who preaches of a charity which "thinketh no evil," while, contrary to what his Bible teaches him, he bears false witness against his neighbor. This may be orthodox morality, but it is practically hypocrisy. Is the Doctor ignorant of the fact that such writers as the Bishop of Hereford, Dr. Chalmers, Professor Tyndall, and many others whose names could be cited, have given their testimony that Atheists can be, and are, good and true without having any belief in religion?

When the Doctor states that "religion and ethics are indissolubly connected," to what religion does he refer? Surely not to that of Judaism, for some of its most religious characters were far from being ethical. Where was the morality of David, a man who is said to have been after God's own heart? No doubt the man had plenty of religion, but his conduct was barbarous, cruel, and treacherous, and his whole life was false to every principle of morality. Did not Jesus himself denounce the Pharisees—the most religious people of the age—as immoral, devouring widows' houses, and making the temple a den of thieves? Neither is it true that Christianity and ethics have always been allied. Where was the morality of the foremost religionists of the Middle Ages? They indulged in open licentiousness, robbery, drunkenness, and murder. The religion of Europe at that time was steeped in almost every crime known to man. Further, were not the prominent men in the Christian Church the upholders and abettors of the curse of slavery? And did not Mr. Gladstone admit that he had found thousands of Churchmen who had "gone lamentably wrong upon questions involving deeply the interests of truth, justice, and humanity"?

It would, perhaps, be difficult to present, from an ethical standpoint, a more serious objection to the Decalogue than does Dr. Barrett himself. He says:—

"The Ten Commandments, with two exceptions, are negative in form. 'Thou shalt not' occurs eight times. 'Thou shalt' only twice. To forbid wrong-doing is absolutely necessary, but the not doing of wrong is not the highest ideal of morality. Our criminal law is entirely negative; it deals with actions alone, and forbids evil actions; but no one supposes that if he does not disobey the criminal law he is therefore a moral man, or even a good citizen. I may not steal, I may not kill, I may not slander my neighbor, I may not commit adultery, but still I may be a bad man at heart; and in like manner this Jewish code of morals, dealing for the most part, as it does, with the negative side of goodness, forbidding evil rather than commanding that which is good, is necessarily limited and incomplete, and is far from being the perfect law for the Christian man."

This is quite true, for a moral code that simply teaches what should not be done is inadequate to thoroughly promote ethical culture. People should be taught what to do and how to do it, and why a certain course of conduct is necessary to produce and maintain a moral condition of society. And this is just the information which the Doctor admits the Decalogue does not supply. Wherein, therefore, is the value of the extravagant praise he bestows in the earlier part of his sermons upon the Ten Commandments?

The Doctor alleges that the commandment, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me," is "an implicit denial of all Atheism." This is not so; it is only the denial of Atheism in reference to the Christian's God. He states that of "dogmatic Atheism" there is "very little in the present day," but "practical Atheism" is "far more common." The Doctor could, with strict accuracy, have said more, and told his congregation that professed Christians themselves are adherents of "practical Atheism," for probably not one in a thousand believes in the Bible God. The belief of Theists of to-day is really in a God of their own imagination. It is almost impossible to induce a clergyman or minister to hold a public debate upon the existence and character of the Bible Deity, and therefore they break the first commandment. With a candor that does him credit, the Doctor says:—

"And when I speak of practical Atheism I mean the Atheism of the heart and not of the head, the Atheism of the life and not of the reason, the Atheism, in one word, of that man to whose daily life it would make no kind of difference if there were no God. Are there not men and women whose life would not be affected in the smallest degree if to-morrow it were ascertained there was no God? Are there not men and women whose daily life goes on without the smallest reference to God, and are not these Atheists? I have spoken of the peril of intellectual or dogmatic Atheism, but I question if even the peril of such a denial of God is greater than that which comes to us from the man who says, 'I believe in God,' and then lives as if there were none. Such a man may go to church, may repeat the Creed, may pretend to pray.....but he is none the less an Atheist in his life, for he denied God."

This is clear confirmation of my allegation that Christians, as a rule, are practical Atheists. The principal difference

between the two is that the avowed Atheist honestly acknowledges his non-belief in a Deity, while professed Christians pretend to believe in such a being, but do not.

I agree with Dr. Barrett that, so far as the existence of God is concerned, there is really no difference between Agnosticism and Atheism, as the latter term is understood at the present day. Neither word means the denial of God, for it would be illogical to deny that of which we confess we know nothing. The Doctor assumes a knowledge of God, although he does not venture to say what that knowledge is. Practically, he is an Atheist in reference to the Christian's God. He considers that Agnosticism is fatal to "all human goodness"; still he admits that an Agnostic, such as Herbert Spencer, may be a man of all moral excellence." If this is so, how can Agnosticism be fatal to "all human goodness"? Surely the Agnosticism of Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall did not destroy the goodness of their lives. The fact is, the sermons preached to-day, even by the leading exponents of the Christian faith, are mere assertions and assumptions addressed to those who are not inclined to exercise their critical faculties. The mission of Freethought is to counteract these efforts to perpetuate mental stagnation, by urging the necessity of following the dictates of cultivated reason, this being the noblest function of the human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

Acid Drops.

WHAT an awful calamity is that which has overtaken St. Pierre, on the Island of Martinique. A volcanic eruption wiped out a whole town, with its 25,000 inhabitants, almost in a few minutes. Imagination shrinks from realising the terrible scene. Those who saw it say it was "a glimpse of hell." Naturally the whole civilised world is appalled, and ready aid is being sent to the survivors of the widespread convulsion of nature in the West Indies. England is not behind in this work of mercy. It is universally felt that such calamities ought not to take place, only they cannot be prevented. Yet the very people who feel this, for the most part, believe in a God behind nature, who directs her forces, and could have prevented this calamity if he pleased. Nor is that all. Millions of these people, who shudder at the thought of 25,000 men, women, and children being burnt to death, actually believe that God will burn the vast majority of the human race for ever and ever. Wesleyans, for instance, who doubtless feel as sick as the rest of us at the fiery doom of the inhabitants of St. Pierre, are just now engaged in chivvying a theological professor (Dr. Beet) for not being quite sure that the torture of lost souls is prolonged through all eternity. What a mad world we live in! And what a horrible religion is Christianity!

According to the latest reports, it appears that the inhabitants of St. Pierre were burnt out of existence on the very day that they had appointed for a grand public procession to appease the wrath of heaven as manifested in the recent activity of the volcano. On Wednesday evening solemn prayers had been offered up in the churches. On Thursday morning the entire population was preparing for the day's religious celebration. It was just then—as if to hold up to ridicule the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer—that "the awful mountain explosion turned the townspeople into a confused mass of helpless maniacs." Those who believe in Prayer or Providence after this are beyond the reach of reason. In face of such a calamity, and in such circumstances, both doctrines are an insult to human intelligence.

The *Daily News* had a leading article on the awful disaster at St. Pierre. The concluding remarks contained a dignified reference to nature, and a fine quotation from Matthew Arnold. From this we gather that, whilst the popular theological vocabulary is useful for railway and other trifling accidents, it is quite inadequate for serious matters.

More "Providence." A Japanese herring fleet on the west coast of Hokkaido has been caught in a terrible gale, and 250 lives are reported to have been lost.

A special train of Belgian pilgrims—on their way to Lourdes to obtain supernatural aid and a miraculous recovery from their diseases—ran off the rails and got smashed. Some of the pilgrims went to heaven instead of to Lourdes. This, however, was considered unfortunate. Others will be maimed for life. What a practical sermon on the superstition of "Providence"!

The late Dr. Newman Hall's estate has been valued at £15,290 gross and £12,744 net. Not a bad nest-egg for a preacher of the gospel of poverty. It is a paying business when you make your mark in it.

Talmage, the late Talmage, seems to have left a son in the same line of business. This gentleman declares that his father did not go on lecturing tours to make money. Oh dear no! Perish the thought. He did make money, but we suppose that was an unfortunate accident. His object was—well, you would never guess it; it was to get rest in railway travelling, so that he could "come back refreshed to do more valiant service for Christ." Whereat we are tempted to quote Byron:—

Oh! for a *forty-parson* power to chant
Thy praise, Hypocrisy!

At a recent meeting at the Church House the Archbishop of Canterbury regretted the inadequate supply of men for missionary enterprise. "It was very difficult," he said, "to find them at all, and when they did find them it was very difficult to persuade them to go." Dr. Temple never went himself. He knew a better game than that. It was at home that he was in the running for £15,000 a year.

The very Rev. Dean Farrar has been telling the world through the *Daily News* what he would do if he were a millionaire. This is one of the cheapest forms of virtue. To use the words of Hamlet, it is as easy as lying.

By the way, Dean Farrar runs perilously near to lying in this *Daily News* article. He refers to Solomon, the richest of all the Jewish kings, etc., as saying: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." Now, upon the face of it, it is absurd to suppose that such words were uttered by a rich king. Moreover, Dean Farrar knows very well, and has admitted it elsewhere, that Solomon was *not* the author of any of the writings ascribed to him in the Old Testament. "Solomon says" is therefore only humbug for the mob of ignorant or half-educated readers of a big daily newspaper.

With regard to "The Rich Man's Duty" this pious preacher to millionaires says: "First of all I should say that it seems to me to be a primary duty for every rich man to obey the rule, which is both ancient and modern, both Jewish and Christian, of at once putting aside one-tenth of his income for purposes of charity." Dr. Farrar ought to know, and probably does know, that this is not a Christian rule. Where is it to be found in the New Testament? The only rule of charity to be found there is the order to "sell that thou hast and give to the poor." Not a *part*, but *all*.

But it would never do to preach that gospel to millionaires. Still less, perhaps, would it do to remind them of other words from the mouth of Jesus Christ which, if followed, would prevent them from becoming millionaires at all. Here are a few samples: "Take no thought for the morrow." "Labor not for the meat that perisheth." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." "Blessed be ye poor." "Woe unto you rich." Let the very reverend Dean Farrar ring the changes on those texts—if he dares. When he does so we shall have a higher opinion of his honesty.

Godmanchester rejoices in a pious Town Council. That is in the fitness of things, for one can hardly imagine a town with such a name being ruled by the ungodly. But the Godmanchester magnates are a trifle rough on those who are not of their way of thinking. They have decided not to permit a floating stage to be erected on the river unless a guarantee is given that no boats will be let out on Sundays. Why don't they go a little further, and pass a resolution against the river flowing on the Lord's Day?

The Government got a big majority (402 to 165 = 237) for the second reading of the Education Bill, which is ostensibly a Voluntary Schools Relief Bill, but is virtually a Voluntary Schools Monopoly Bill. This overwhelming majority, of course, included the Irish vote. In all such matters the Irish vote will be cast according to the direction of the Roman Catholic Church. Here is a Bill that does not apply to Scotland or Ireland, yet the Irish vote is used to fasten it upon the neck of England. Some day or other, perhaps, it will be seen that Home Rule for Ireland means Home Rule for England too.

Discussing the prospects of the Education Bill, the *British Weekly* says: "The Church party has upon its side not merely those who are deeply concerned for the maintenance of a Unionist Government, but also those who look upon all religion as a mere superstition, deeming, however, that superstition has its uses, and that of the two forms of superstition the Anglican is the least objectionable." These latter supporters are hardly likely to be of much assistance, for the simple reason that we do not believe them to exist.

Evidently Nonconformists are beginning to lose their heads

in their fear and hatred of the Church. They are even going back upon themselves into a position which up to now they have steadfastly objected to. A correspondent of the *British Weekly* is allowed to say: "There are not a few tokens that out of the present confusion there will emerge again the strong plea that there shall be a severance of the so-called religious and secular education. The plan has its defects, but if it is the only consistent course to take, may it not be the wisest and the best? This is no new plea. The records of the educational controversy show us that, as far back as 1846, Dr. Hook, then vicar of Leeds, pathetically pleaded that educational strifes might largely be set at rest if it could only be agreed that the State should give what he called the literary and scientific (what we now call the secular) education, and the different churches give the religious teaching."

This, of course, is the natural solution of the problem, which, indeed, would have been no problem at all if Nonconformists had accepted that principle from the first. Now it looks as if some of them are being driven into it by their enmity to the Church.

Father Dolling is cited in the above letter as mourning over the travesty of religious teaching given in too many schools. He would "hail the day when the State would lay aside all pretence of giving the religious education. Then he believed the clergy of the Church of England, and the ministers and Christian teachers of other churches, might awake to their responsibility, and arise to meet it."

"Old Mother Brown and the Unhappy Infidel" is the title given in a religious weekly to a story told at the May meeting of the Christian Police Association in Exeter Hall. Mr. Spencer Walton related the story as follows: "There was a man who was a great infidel, and who lectured against Christianity. But he happened to listen one day to a band of open-air preachers, and what he heard made him very anxious. He soon wanted to get the religion which these people possessed. But he found that some Christians he went to feared to converse with him, and doubted his object in coming. Then someone said to him, 'Go to old Mother Brown down in the cellar of a house in such-and-such an alley.' The infidel was indignant. 'A pretty thing, indeed—a respectable, well-known man like me to go down to such a place, and to ask for help and instruction from an old woman of the slums!' And he refused to go. But he was so miserable that finally he went. Arrived at the cellar, he heard someone singing in a feeble but joyful voice:—

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!

He tapped at the door, and, as she opened it, she smiled at him, and asked, 'What can I do for you, sir?' He answered, 'I am the infidel So-and-So, and I am very unhappy.' Instantly she replied, 'Come along in, sir. The Lord will soon put you right.' They went on their knees together in the cellar, and the old woman most fervently prayed with, and for, him; and he came out loosed from his sin and unbelief, 'a new man in Christ Jesus.'"

The name of this "great infidel" lecturer, who was converted by old Mother Brown in a slum cellar, is not disclosed. The name *never* is disclosed in these conversion stories. It would be fatal. The nearest you get to it is "Mr. Dash, of Dash-street, Dash-town, in the year Dash." At the end of which Dashes you are ready to call it "a Dash Lie."

It is said that the bitter weather with which May opened was due to mighty sheets of ice—the worst for a hundred years—packed on the north and east of Iceland, and threatening a famine to the islanders. Be that as it may, the bitter weather is a hard fact, and many will find it so. Its effect on the fruit crops is described as "very serious." There is pretty certain to be great and widespread loss. Nor is the mischief confined to England. Half the cherry crop in France is already gone. Such are the ways of "Providence."

A dispatch from Harper Town, Kansas, says that an alarm, amounting among the more superstitious to almost a panic, has spread there because of what are believed to be the prophetic inspired words of a five-weeks-old infant. Its words are said to be clear and incisive, and it has kept repeating them at irregular intervals during wakefulness ever since. They are: "Six years of famine in Kansas." The sentence is taken by many to be a message from the Deity, to be disregarded by hearers at their peril. Already a number of farmers are said to be leaving the State, firm in the belief that a long drought is approaching. Hundreds have travelled to Harper and waited for hours to secure confirmation of the story from the baby's lips!

Prince Henry, during his recent visit to the United States, was the recipient of many welcoming addresses, but, says the *Christian Age* very gravely, only one contained any reference to religion. And this address was given not by a preacher, but by the Secretary of the United States navy. The *Christian Age* is shocked, but rational people will

inquire what the deuce the naval secretary had to do with religion in such a connection.

A Russian journal for Spiritualists has added a feature entitled "From the Other World." "This column," explains the editor, "will not be conducted by us, but by our invisible collaborator." There is an idea for some of our enterprising ha'penny contemporaries. Why don't they get a tame spirit on their staffs? The news from the other world would be quite as reliable as a great deal of the news they publish concerning the mundane sphere. Stead's Julia was "no class." If one of the ha'pennies would specially kill a selected young man for the job, there would soon be a good supply of celestial sensations.

It was stated at Southwark Police-court the other day that a prisoner was kept waiting for bail from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Sunday because his father was too conscientious to ride in an omnibus on the Sabbath.

A man of ability has only to let it be known that he rejects the prevalent religious creeds, and immediately it is discovered that there are defects in his work. Here is a passage from Dr. Robertson Nicoll's review of Sir Walter Besant's autobiography: "Of his religious views I shall only say that they did much to prevent him attaining real greatness. They narrowed his horizon to an extraordinary degree, and killed sympathies the existence of which is almost necessary to the production of enduring work."

Now, how did they "narrow his horizon"? He saw all that there was to be seen, and saw *through* it. And it says something for his "sympathies"—a mistaken sympathy, as we regard it, in this case—that he avoided in his works anything which might be supposed to give pain to those who held religious views which he did not share. Possibly, in Dr. Robertson Nicoll's estimation, the *beau ideal* novelist is Silas Hocking. He, God knows, has plenty and to spare of the commodity which poor Besant lacked.

Dr. Agar Beet has got into trouble over his heresy. He has been Theological Professor at Richmond, but the Wesleyan Institution Committee have declined to nominate him for another term. His offence appears to be that he has written two books, in which he argues that the Bible gives no warrant for saying that the lost are condemned to eternal suffering or that they are annihilated. He is probably wrong in his view of Bible teaching in regard to eternal torment, but what does it matter? Freethinkers, who are doubtless reckoned among the "lost," don't care a rap what the Bible says on the subject.

Dr. Agar Beet, we believe, was one of the Committee who drew up the "Free Churches Catechism"—which, somehow or other, quite overlooked the Devil and left him out in the cold. We are not astonished, therefore, at his persecution by Wesleyans on account of his unsoundness on the burning question of everlasting punishment. Dr. Beet has dropped that view; moreover, he says it "has been abandoned by all really thoughtful men." His present view is simply negative. "The Bible," he asserts, "does not say what finally becomes of the lost." The same view was held by Mr. Gladstone, the political idol of the Nonconformists. But the more orthodox Wesleyans, believing, and perhaps rightly, that theology cannot live on open questions, are trying to boycott Dr. Beet out of his professorship. This pretty quarrel is likely to come to a climax at the Wesleyan Conference in July. As it is all about hell, it will just suit the dog days.

A long letter signed "John Thomas," and dated from Liverpool, appears in the *British Weekly* anent the editor's article on "The Bible in Tatters." John Thomas contributes nothing to the discussion except that he denounces Dr. Cheyne, Schmiedel, and Van Manen, and demands that they should be "corrected and restrained with a firm hand," and that they should be "visited with the severest condemnation." Quite so, John Thomas. How would twelve months' imprisonment do, seeing that in the present day they can't very well be burned at the stake?

The cat was let out of the bag at the recent annual meeting of the Medical Mission Auxiliary of the Church Missionary Society. Dr. E. F. Neve, of Kashmir, said that "at first missionaries met with great hostility until medical work was begun; but since then they had never had any trouble; now they daily got about 150 persons to listen to the Gospel, and there was no opposition to their work; people were even anxious to hear more and more of the religion that brought them such relief." What a miserable confession! The Gospel powerless without a bottle of medicine! And what hypocritical language! It was not the "religion" that brought the "relief." Science brought the relief, and religion traded on false pretences. But it is the same sort of game everywhere. The heathen are not converted by the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel. Here it is Christ and a bottle of physic, there it is Christ and free rice,

elsewhere it is Christ and board and lodgings. It is always Christ and *something*.

Queen Wilhelmina, having passed through the worst of her trouble—largely owing to the best medical skill and nursing—the Protestant minister at Apeldoorn Church, in the presence of the Prince Consort, delivered an address of thanksgiving for the recovery of the beloved Queen, who, he said, had been saved by the hand of God. Well, if God saved her, the doctors and nurses were useless. And why doesn't God take the trouble to save *poor* women in similar trouble? Is God a flunkey?

Superstition dies hard. A Tipperary cattle-driver has just been sent to prison for three months for attempting to bewitch a cow. Still, we need not sneer too emphatically at the Irish. In the parish of Whitwell, in Derbyshire, at Rogationtide, the clergy and choir perambulated the fields for three days' blessing the crops and praying for a bounteous harvest. What difference is there, scientifically, between blessing crops and cursing cows?

Parsons used to say: "Come and be saved; stay away and be damned." That was in the good old days. They are less peremptory now. Some of them will actually mind your bicycle for you while you drop into the House of God to pray—or rest. Over at Chicago there is a soul-saver who goes one better than that. He minds babies while their mothers worship. Each infant is ticketed like the parcels in a cloak-room, and delivered out when the service is over.

The Pope's congratulations on his improved health reached Archbishop Corrigan, of New York, on Monday evening, May 5. A few hours later he died. God's viceregent on earth was evidently not inspired on that occasion.

Mr. Reader Harris, K.C., was in great form the other day at Exeter Hall. The occasion was the annual meeting of his Pentecostal League. Mr. Harris combines the law and the Gospel, and makes a pretty good thing from the profits of each. At least, we may assume as much from his boisterous, self-satisfied style. The *Rock* says his orations are "breezy." That is true as far as mere windiness goes. But, whatever we may think of Mr. Harris as an exploiter of a new religious craze, a self-styled "converted Agnostic" who does not even seem to know what Agnosticism is, and a barrister who may or may not be very "learned in the law," this much can be said—he is no fool in the art of self-advertising. He has briefed himself for the Bible, and retained himself for Christ; but he is open to take on other jobs, and does not forget to let his audiences know it.

For instance, at the commencement of the Pentecostal League proceedings it was announced that Mr. Reader Harris was "detained in court, but hoped to be present later in the afternoon," which announcement was afterwards duly chronicled in the *Rock*. When at last he turned up amongst his expectant Pentecostal people he said: "The editor of the *Rock* writes to me (and I'm so glad that one religious paper has a lawyer for its editor—and he's a member of my own Inn) to tell me that he will have a report of this meeting in the next issue. I've great hopes of the *Rock*." After a hymn and prayer, Mr. Harris said: "If you *will* have a lawyer for a chairman, mind you have one with a wife. She gives my lectures for me now." The friendly *Rock* describes this as a "touch of dry humor." But Mr. Harris, it says, "instantly dropped into seriousness." He took as his text 2 Corinthians ix. 8, but once more talked "shop." He had, he said, been examining witnesses during the day. By-and-bye the Devil would examine them. From which statement it may be inferred that Mr. Harris and the Devil are both in the same line of business.

Mr. Harris again talked "shop" at the second meeting, when, after describing his "progress from the gloom of Agnosticism," he commented on the "important step" in the history of the *Rock* which had been taken by the "appointment of a lawyer" as its editor. Afterwards there was a period for silent prayer, and then audible petitions for those who rose to seek a special blessing in special need. "There rises a well-known sceptic," said Mr. Harris. No one, we are told, looked round, all remaining bowed in earnest supplication. Who was "the well-known sceptic"? Was he one of the "shams" of whom Reader Harris talked at the afternoon meeting?

Why should there not be concerts in the parks on Sunday afternoons? The Liverpool City Council has decided against such a proposal by thirty-six votes to twenty-three. The *Birmingham Mail*, commenting on this decision, boldly observes that, if the proposal were carried out, it would have a better influence upon the thousands "than many of the sermons which are preached every Sabbath day. Music in the parks on Sunday afternoons would brighten many a miserable life, and draw forth from their shells many of the human mistakes who now hide in the courts and alleys of cities."

The *Rock* office has been burgled! Sacrilegious hands have broken open the letter-box, and the whole of the first mail on a recent Saturday morning—usually a very heavy one—has been abstracted. The thieves have taken an installment of a serial which has been running, or rather dragging, through the pages of the *Rock*. The author kept no copy, and so the tale has come to a sudden stop. We don't think the readers will feel half as much aggrieved as the editor and the author do. Perhaps they will regard it as a happy release from what was undoubtedly an infliction.

But, of course, this was not a "mere petty larceny." Some malign and subtle influence has inspired the depredation. It was the Jesuits! Trust the *Rock* for finding this out. It perceives a "decidedly curious coincidence of this outrage with the sensational statements about the Jesuits in the preceding day's *Rock*. As a matter of fact, one or two specially important and intimate communications in reference to our crusade were included in the stolen mail." Of much use will they be to the thieves.

The Bishop of London seems to have got over the depression caused by his coming into an income of £10,000 a year. He hardly knew how to hold up his head at first, but he appears to be all right now. He turned up at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the newspaper report we saw described him as "bright and buoyant." We dare say he would get used to the Archbishop of Canterbury's £15,000 a year in time.

"When he was defending the Bible against Secularists in the parks," Bishop Ingram said, "he had no more loyal colleagues than the Nonconformists." But what is there wonderful in that? Nonconformists are Christians, though the Bishop of London is apparently a little surprised at the fact; and Christians without the Bible are like fishes without water. Of course it is just possible that Bishop Ingram simply wanted to remind his hearers of the achievements of his pre-episcopal days. He has often boasted of his encounters with Secularists in the parks, but we believe they existed chiefly in his own pious imagination.

Sir Henry Fowler was the principal lay speaker at this Bible Society meeting. Naturally he referred to the war in South Africa. Never, he said, had there been a war carried on by an army "displaying such sobriety and purity as that of England." "This," he added, "was due to the Bible." We venture to say it is due to the progress of civilisation. The Bible was more devoutly believed to be the Word of God, and there were fewer disbelievers in its divine inspiration, when the British soldiers drank and ravished in the Peninsular War. Let us also remind Sir Henry Fowler that it would be a case of hell let loose if our army fought on Old Testament lines.

The following items of news appeared in one number of a London halfpenny journal. John Frost, a Chatham local preacher, was sentenced to three months' hard labor for embezzling £60 belonging to his employer. At an inquest respecting the death of Margaret Middleton, the daughter of a Lancaster tradesman, a local preacher denied the allegations of the girl on her death-bed that he had had improper relations with her, and the jury disbelieved his denial, with the Coroner's entire concurrence. On the whole, these servants of the Lord don't seem much better than other people.

The *Daily Telegraph* gives a curious account of the burial of Mouchi Berrebi, the late Grand Rabbi of Tunis. About five thousand Jews of all classes struggled to get near the dead body of the man of God. They believed that whoever helped to carry it, kissed it, or even touched the linen shroud enveloping it, would receive pardon for all sins committed and an assurance of a place in heaven. The police had all their work cut out to keep order. Of course the deceased Rabbi was indifferent to all the noise and hubbub. He was dead, and (to use Bret Harte's language) the subsequent proceedings interested him no more.

Once upon a time the Pope was dead against cycling by Catholic priests, but he now appears to be relenting in this respect. Cardinal Vaughan has intimated to Dr. Burton, the new Bishop of Clifton, that, while it would be undignified to cycle about the streets and slums of Bristol, there was no objection to his spinning over the Clifton downs. The difference is, of course, based upon the necessity of imposing on the popular imagination. Priests must not suddenly become new-fashioned, and must never become too common.

"Christianity *versus* Ethics" is the title of a four-page tract, setting forth the difference between "the Christian's God" and "the God of Ethical Requirements." We never heard of the latter God before. But this is a world in which you live and learn. "The Christian's God," this tract concludes, "is the God of Babylon, Judæa, and Paul. The God of Ethical Requirements is the God of Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus." Which is distinctly odd, seeing that Buddha and Confucius had no God at all.

Important Notice.

The business of the Freethought Publishing Company, including the publication of the **FREE-THINKER**, is now carried on at No. 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 18, N. S. S. Conference.

To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 1, Masonic Hall, Camberwell.—Address, 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—May 18, N. S. S. Conference; 25, afternoon, Victoria Park.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for the trouble you take in sending us useful cuttings.

W. E. JENKINSON.—*Ethics* is a weekly, not a monthly, publication. Price one penny. It is sold, with other "advanced" literature, at our publishing office.

W. ROWLAND.—Thanks; but the publication is rather behind date now, is it not?

W. H. LAWIN.—May your good wishes for the "continued success" of the *Freethinker* be realised.

J. YOUNG.—Correction made as requested. Thanks for your sympathetic letter. True friends are one of the best blessings of life, and false friends one of its worst banes. A perception of this truth, no doubt from painful experience, prompted the famous old exclamation: "God protect me from my friends; my own right arm will protect me from mine enemies."

F. H. wishes us to give him the names and addresses of some London booksellers who are known to be Freethinkers. We do not see that we are entitled to advertise booksellers' opinions, even if we knew them. There is one London bookseller, however, who has edited and published the works of an Atheistic poet—James Thomson ("B. V."). We violate no confidence in giving this bookseller's name and address. It is Mr. B. Dobell, Charing Cross-road, W.

R. FLETCHER.—Your Christian friend proceeds upon the silly assumption that Colonel Ingersoll was bound to reply to everybody who chose to "answer him." Hundreds of men of God in the United States tried to lift themselves into notoriety in this way. When they found that Ingersoll would not advertise them, they cried out that he was "defeated." But the American public only laughed at them. Ingersoll crossed swords with Judge Black, Dr. Field, Cardinal Manning, and Mr. Gladstone. The notion that he was afraid of Father Lambert is an extravagant compliment to that insignificant and ill-mannered priest.

L. D. H.—You do *not* intrude by addressing us. We are always pleased to hear from correspondents who are genuinely interested in the movement. What you say is true enough as to the desirability of the Freethought party having a hall of its own in the West of London. We hope to tackle this problem before we fall into the sere and yellow leaf. But the time is not yet, and you must try to be patient, as we have to be. Your kind promise of help will be borne in mind.

We have received a letter from Mr. Charles Watts. It will appear in our next with our reply, which we hope will be final. Daniel Leno, Esquire, has made an unexpected call upon our space this week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Postal Record—Searchlight—Freidenker—Freethought Magazine—Sydney Bulletin—Truthseeker—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—La Raison—Public Opinion.

The National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, 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.

THE National Secular Society's Annual Conference takes place to-day (Whit-Sunday) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W. The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, will take the chair punctually at half-past ten in the morning. Delegates and individual members are requested to be seated by then.

There will be no lecture at the Athenæum Hall on Whit-Sunday evening, in consequence of the public meeting which is to be held at the Queen's Hall in connection with the N. S. S. Conference. We earnestly hope that the London "saints" will see that the Queen's Hall is filled on this occasion. Musical selections will be given from 7 o'clock to 7.30, when the President will take the chair. The list of speakers includes Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Cohen. Other speakers will help to interest the meeting, but we are not able at the moment to announce their names.

Delegates and visitors from the provinces, who have not had hotel or other accommodation provided for them in advance and do not know where to find what they require, should go straight from the railway station, on arriving in London, to the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, W., where the N. S. S. Secretary or some member of the Executive will be happy to attend to them.

Many will regret to hear that Miss E. M. Vance has been confined to her bed for some days. The illness was particularly annoying to her, as it happened when she ought to have been especially busy with various preparations for the N. S. S. Conference. We are glad to state that she is now somewhat better, although far from being as well as we should like to see her.

Mr. Francis Neale has so far improved in health that he hopes to be present at the N. S. S. Conference, and to do the report for the *Freethinker*. He will have to travel up from Birmingham for the purpose, and we understand that he has been asked to be one of the representatives of the Branch in that city.

East London Freethinkers will please note that there will be no Secular meetings in Victoria Park to-day (Whit-Sunday), as all the Bethnal Green Branch members are going to attend the N. S. S. Conference.

The Song of Mary.

THE Holy Spirit began to strive
One Friday morn as the clock struck five.
At seven precisely the Lord I found,
And I praised his name with a joyful sound.
I prayed that morn for abundant grace,
And I scrubbed the floors with a shining face.
The butcher and baker and sweep I told
That I'd booked a seat in the Land of Gold.
Said Missis: "So, Mary, your soul is saved—
Well, I hope it will make you better behaved!"

The Missis, of course, is a cross old thing,
But—well, it was *rather* discouraging!

My young man cried: "You're a 'convert,' eh?
Then you won't suit me; so, my dear, good-day!"
My chat to the baker had done no good,
The butcher chaffed me about "the blood."
The sweep said: "It's all very well, you know,
But how am I to be 'white as snow'?"
I talked to the servant next door, and she
Was as brazen and bold as a girl could be.
She said, with an air which (she thought) was fine,
Her soul wasn't any concern of mine.

Then I prayed for the blessing of *him* on high,
But didn't feel sanguine—I won't say why!

I turned to my Bible and studied hell,
The place where the wicked are said to dwell.
I thought, and I thought, and I thought once more,
And methought that I couldn't have *thought* before;
For I saw that hell and the Home above
Could not both be the work of a God of love;
And I saw that a God who could *all* forgive,
Yet damned some souls, wasn't fit to live.
And I murmured: "Mary, you've had enough
Of this 'wait-for-the-Blessed-Hereafter' stuff!"

So, on in the old, old way I plod,
True to myself—and without a God!

JOHN YOUNG.

Mark xvi. 9—20.

THERE are many portions of the New Testament which the professional expounders of the Christian religion would be glad to get rid of, could only a plausible pretext for so doing be found. One of these is the paragraph containing the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark (xvi. 9—20). This paragraph has been received by the Church and by all denominations of Christians as the inspired word of God from the second century down to the year 1881. Now it is said to form no part of the original Gospel written by Mark, but to be a subsequent supplement by another hand.

In the English Revised Version these twelve verses are practically erased from the Second Gospel; for they are separated from the eight preceding verses, and the following marginal note is inserted to justify the separation:—

"The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel."

Thus is the offending paragraph skilfully set aside as of no authority, because not written by Mark, the reputed author of the rest of the Gospel. There are, of course, good reasons, besides the one assigned, for endeavoring to nullify the statements in this portion of the Second Gospel.

In the first place, if the paragraph be allowed to stand, there are in this sixteenth chapter two independent and contradictory accounts relating to the appearances of Christ after the alleged resurrection. In the first of these (verses 1—8) it is stated that Mary Magdalene and two other women visited the sepulchre at sunrise, and, finding the stone rolled away, went in. There they beheld, not Jesus, but a young man "arrayed in a white robe," who informed them that their Master had risen, and commanded them to go and tell his disciples. The women, however, filled with amazement, "fled from the tomb," and "said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

In the second account (verses 9—11) it is stated that when Christ rose from the dead "he appeared first to Mary Magdalene," and that this lady went of her own accord and informed the disciples of the fact; but the latter, after hearing her story, did not believe it.

The writer of these two accounts is said to be Mark, a travelling companion of Peter, who is supposed to have obtained the materials for his "history" from that Apostle. There is, however, no evidence of this beyond a statement to that effect by Papias, who says he was told so by a presbyter of his acquaintance. We know, as a matter of criticism, that the first three Gospels are not independent accounts, but are compilations from older narratives, and that the editors selected whatever paragraphs they thought fit without the least regard to contradictions. It is thus quite possible that the compiler of the Second Gospel inserted both accounts of the resurrection in his veracious history.

Another good reason for endeavoring to discredit the authenticity of the paragraph may be found in verses 17 and 18, which read:—

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Here it is plainly stated that believers in Christ shall receive power to work miracles. Of course, "these signs" do not "follow them that believe." The promise appears to be given, in the first instance, to those converted by the Apostles; but, like "eternal life" and all the other blessings assured to the faithful, it extends to all believers throughout all time.

It will at once be perceived that it would be very convenient for the Church at the present day to be able to say, with some appearance of truth, that verses 17 and 18 (as well as the whole paragraph) form no part of Mark's Gospel. As might be expected, Christian advocates take full advantage of the doubt cast upon these verses. To take an example, the great Christian Evidence lecturer, the late Thomas Cooper, says in a work on the Resurrection:—

"Some of you may feel a little surprise that I have

limited the record in St. Mark to the first eight verses of the last chapter of his Gospel.....For some reason Mark seems to have left his Gospel unfinished; and some other hand added these twelve verses, that his Gospel might not remain an incomplete record.....I might have passed by these twelve verses without any remark. But, as I resolved not to make any use of them, in our discussion and consideration of the Gospel narrative, I feel it better to give you my honest conviction that they are *not* a part of the original Gospel of St. Mark."

Then follow the reasons: they are not found in the two oldest manuscripts, etc. This being a question of "honest conviction," we may take it that, even if the statements in these last twelve verses had not flatly contradicted the narrative in the preceding eight verses, Mr. Cooper would have "resolved not to make any use of them" all the same.

We will now look at the evidence for and against the authenticity of the paragraph. One thing is certain, to begin with: if these verses be removed, the Second Gospel ends with the words: "And they said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid"—an ending which is obviously incomplete. But before proceeding farther it will be necessary to say a word on manuscripts.

The Gospels, as everyone knows, were written in Greek; but no one ever saw the original MSS. from which they are supposed to have been copied, and which, it is assumed, were composed by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Apostolic age. These hypothetical autographs were "lost" long before the time of the first writer who names the four Gospels. The Greek copies in circulation during the second half of the second century (the earliest we hear of) were used as models from which new copies were made; the latter in their turn served as models for fresh copies, and so in this way new MSS. were multiplied century after century until the invention of printing rendered copying by hand unnecessary. These Greek manuscripts were written in large capital letters (*uncials*) during the first nine centuries; in the tenth, the *cursive* or running hand began to be employed, and this style continued until superseded by the printing press (A.D. 1455).

But, besides the Greek MSS. of the Gospels, there are also the *versions*—that is, manuscripts of the same Gospels in various other languages. After the New Testament books had been in circulation some time, translations were made from the Greek into the Syriac, Egyptian, Latin, and other tongues. Copies of these versions were multiplied, age after age, from the translations first made in the same way as the Greek MSS., and independently of them. The chief of these are: four Syriac versions (the Peshito, the Curetonian, the Philoxenian, and the Jerusalem), two Egyptian versions (the Memphitic and the Thebaic), two Latin versions (the Old Latin and the Vulgate), the Gothic, Æthiopic, Armenian, Georgian, and several other versions. These *versions*, it will thus be seen, represent the contents of Greek MSS. several centuries older than themselves—subject, of course, to errors made in copying.

The reasons given in the English Revised Version for discrediting the last twelve verses of Mark are that "the two oldest Greek manuscripts and some other authorities" omit them, and that "some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel." We will first take the case *against* the authenticity of the paragraph. The two "oldest Greek manuscripts" are the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus*, both of which are "assigned" to the fourth century, but may be a century later. It is quite true that neither of these Uncials contains the paragraph in question, but in the first-named Codex more than a column is left blank after Mark xvi. 8—the only instance of a vacant column throughout the whole manuscript. The transcriber of this MS. was therefore fully aware of the existence of the twelve verses, and left space for their subsequent insertion, in case it was decided to include them.

In one of the Uncials of the eighth century (*Codex L*) there appears after verse 8—which ends: "And they said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid"—the following statement:—

"And this also is somewhere extant: 'And they briefly announced all that was bidden them to Peter and his company. And after this also Jesus himself, from the east even to the west, sent forth through them the holy and incorruptible proclamation of eternal salvation.'"

"And this also is extant after 'for they were afraid.'"
[Then follow the verses 9—20.]

Here we see that the eighth-century scribe knew of two different endings to Mark's Gospel, and transcribed both. This supplementary note in Codex L is also found in one Greek MS. of the tenth century, in one Old Latin copy, in one Memphitic copy, in one Philoxenian copy, and in two Ethiopic copies.

We will now look at the evidence for the authenticity of the disputed paragraph. The twelve verses are found in all the Greek Uncials, save the two above named. Amongst these may be mentioned (1) *Codex Alexandrinus*, which disputes the palm of antiquity with the *Codex Vaticanus*, being assigned to the fourth or fifth century; (2) *Codex of Ephraem*, of the fifth century; (3) *Codex Beza*, of the fifth or sixth century. The twelve verses are found in all the Greek *cursives*, without exception. They are found in all the *versions*—in the Syriac, the Curetonian, the Peshito, the Jerusalem, and Philoxenian texts; in the Thebaic and the Memphitic; in all the Old Latin (save one); in the Vulgate, the Gothic, the Georgian, and in the lesser versions. These versions, as already stated, were derived, in the first instance, from Greek MSS. in circulation at the end of the second century, and therefore preserve, more or less accurately, the texts of the Greek Gospels of that date. We have thus incontestable evidence that the disputed paragraph at the end of the Second Gospel was found in the Greek MSS. of that Gospel more than a century before the "two oldest" codices, which are now extant, came into existence. But we have a still more decisive proof that the paragraph in question formed part of the earliest copies of Mark's Gospel. Irenæus, who first names the four Gospels, actually quotes one of the twelve verses. After saying that, since there were four points of the compass and four principal winds, there could not possibly be either more or less than four Gospels, he proceeds to make some comments upon each. Respecting the Second Gospel, he says (Heresies iii. 10, 6):—

"Wherefore also Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter, does thus commence his Gospel narrative: 'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ,' etc.....Also, towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: 'So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.'"

The passage here quoted is the last verse but one of the paragraph (Mark xvi. 19), whence there can be no doubt that the whole twelve verses were in Irenæus's Greek copy of Mark's Gospel. Thus, at the date when we hear, for the first time, of the existence of the four Gospels (about A.D. 180), we have evidence that the paragraph, which our English Revisers have attempted to discredit, was then the recognised conclusion of the Second Gospel. Moreover, Irenæus was made a bishop A.D. 163, and must at that date have been acquainted with the Gospels for several years. We have thus evidence that the paragraph formed part of Mark's Gospel about the middle of the second century—that is to say, within a decade or two of its first publication.

The explanation of the omission of this paragraph from some MSS. of the fourth century is obvious. Many of the Christian clergy and scholars in that century, and later, were of a more cultured and critical class than in earlier times; and, finding that the last twelve verses of Mark not only contradicted some of the other Gospel accounts of the Resurrection, but contained several undoubtedly false statements, they made strenuous efforts, but without success, to expunge it from that Gospel.

ABRACADABRA.

Obituary.

It is with deep regret that we have to announce the death of Mr. G. Weller, of Southsea, a staunch Radical and equally earnest Freethinker. Mr. Weller made no secret of his heretical opinions with either his political or religious friends, which, in his position, was no light proof of his independence and courage. The funeral took place on Monday, May 12, at the Highland-road Cemetery, in the presence of a goodly number of friends and mourners. By special request of the deceased, Mr. C. Cohen gave a brief address over the grave, which produced a marked impression upon those present. In the death of Mr. Weller, Freethought has lost one who in his sphere was an earnest and energetic worker, and one who, even in death, had not ceased to set an example that others might worthily follow.

Crooked Christians.

ONE of the most necessary, though at first perhaps disquieting, lessons which the young reformer has to master is that in the realm of thought there is no one whose guidance is infallible, and that even very capable guides at times make very bad mistakes. Or, to vary the metaphor, whilst he will find that there are main streams flowing this way and that about which there is little question, there are, besides, innumerable cross-currents, the effect of which is somewhat bewildering. An example of this confusion is furnished by a recent article in the *New Age*, by Mr. W. M. Crook, on the much-discussed topic of Cecil Rhodes's religious or non-religious belief. The rambling stuff which Mr. Stead has given forth as Mr. Rhodes's opinions has proved a stumbling-block to the journalist, and Mr. Crook's comments do not make the matter much clearer.

It is, however, chiefly with one of Mr. Crook's paragraphs I am here concerned. After thanking the *New Age*—which is anti-militarist and anti-Imperialist—for its "tolerance" in allowing him to say that the late Mr. Rhodes was "the greatest and most spiritually-minded" of the "Empire-makers," Mr. Crook later on makes these remarks:—

"Every Sunday tens of thousands of Atheists, who are professing Christians, flock into our churches and chapels of every denomination. The people who call themselves Atheists are few in number and are not all Atheists. Some of them are much better Christians than the majority of church-goers. That is to say, without knowing it, they listen to the voice of God and obey His Will. Of the people who go to church and are Atheists, some are conscious hypocrites—that is to say, they do not deceive themselves, they merely deceive (or try to deceive) other people. Others are unconscious hypocrites—they deceive both themselves and other people; while some really believe what they profess."

It would not be easy to get more confusion into a single paragraph than Mr. Crook has contrived to embody in this. Let us take the thing piece by piece. An Atheist is one who regards the ordinary "definition" of "God" as merely a contradiction in terms; and he sets aside this self-contradiction as meaningless, as he would set aside the doctrine of a circular triangle. Now, Mr. Crook says that "tens of thousands of Atheists" profess to be Christians—that is to say, they are hypocrites. It decidedly seems a large estimate, but doubtless there are very many persons who, from social or family pressure, pretend to be Christians whilst they intellectually reject Christianity. Then, says Mr. Crook, the persons who call themselves Atheists are few in number and are not all Atheists. Well, if a man who sets aside the God-idea as intellectually worthless, and proclaims the fact, is not an Atheist, how are we to determine who is an Atheist at all? Mr. Crook says that "some of them [the Atheists] are much better Christians than the majority of church-goers." Well, how does Mr. Crook distinguish those Atheists who are really good Christians from those others who, by implication, are not? He says, of course, that, without knowing it, the Christian Atheists "listen to the voice of God and obey His Will." But who is to settle which of the Atheists are "obeying God" unawares, and which are not? Then we come to the Atheists who go to church, and, whilst some of them are "conscious hypocrites," yet "some really believe what they profess." The last sentence is—at any rate to me—the climax of the muddle. If a man is an Atheist and goes to church and professes to be a Christian, how can he believe what he professes and disbelieve it at the same time?

Behind all this muddling there is, I think, a certain idea in Mr. Crook's crookedness. Let it be explained that Mr. Crook is a journalist who has opposed the war-fever very vigorously, and in that way, I believe, has shared with Mr. Massingham the honor of having been driven from an editorial chair on account of his opinions. Mr. Crook is also, evidently, a strong Christian. Now comes Mr. Crook's dilemma. He is faced by the fact that, whilst most of the war-backing has come from Christians and official Christians, most of the opposition to the war has come, if not from

actually proclaimed Atheists, at least from those given to a Rationalist way of thinking; whereas a good deal of the opposition has come directly from open and avowed Atheists. Indeed, when the history of the madness which seized on the English multitude in the years 1899-1902 comes to be calmly written, one of the facts which will stand out to the honor of Freethought is that, from beginning to end, the war was opposed, and its folly and criminality proclaimed, by men who—from the great names down to almost the smallest—were, nine out of ten of them, Freethinkers.

In the rush and scramble of political work the fact is apt to be overlooked, but the record is positively remarkable. Take a few instances. The one British statesman of front rank who fought the war-makers before war was brought about, and who has fought them down to the present day, is a Freethinker—John Morley. The exposure and refutation of the war-case which created the most effect was written by a Freethinker—Mr. John A. Hobson. And behind it came the work, no less careful, and perhaps of more popular appeal, of another Freethinker—Mr. John M. Robertson. Even the educational work of pamphleteering and lecturing done by Mr. E. B. Rose is important, for he lived in Johannesburg under the "corrupt oligarchy"—and Mr. Rose is a Freethinker. Whilst the great names are legion. Mr. Herbert Spencer, Professor Bain, Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Professor Goldwin Smith, Mr. G. J. Holyoake, Mr. Hyndman, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Bryce, Mr. William Watson—not many of these are "professing Christians," and very few "flock into our churches and chapels."

Here, then, is Mr. Crook's case. He himself is against the war, and therefore modestly decides, after the regulation Christian fashion, that Christianity should lead men against it. Those Christians who are for the war equally modestly think that Christ would have been impressed by the righteousness of the British case if he were alive to-day. Indeed, the average Jingo, as someone has said, identifies the purpose of the cosmos with the fortunes of the British Army. So Mr. Crook wants to make out that those Atheists who politically agree with him are true Christians, whilst those Christians who disagree with him are really Atheists. And the mark of the true faith is agreement with Mr. Crook.

It is grotesque that a keen-witted man of Mr. Crook's status should put forward such a proposition. But that certainly seems to be the idea struggling for expression through the tangled paragraph that has been quoted. If the thing were not so manifestly absurd, one might ask Mr. Crook does he seriously mean that the hundreds of thousands of Christians who have supported this war are not as convinced Theists as he himself? Does he argue that Mr. Herbert Spencer is a good Christian, whilst Mr. Hugh Price Hughes is a naughty Atheist?

When Mr. Crook suggests that, say, Mr. J. M. Robertson is obeying God's will without knowing it (though Mr. Crook seems to know it to be able to say so), we might let him have his joke in exchange for his good politics. But the issue is more serious. And, for my part, I take leave to say that Mr. Crook's attempt to take credit to Christianity for a line of conduct conspicuously pursued by non-Christians, and to debit Atheism with conduct mostly carried on by Christians, is a piece of argumentative jugglery in no vital respect different from the worst jugglery of the war-mongers themselves. That Mr. Crook, courageously opposing the war at personal loss, should be capable of this descent on the theological side is one more example of that warp in good minds, to which I referred at the beginning, which leads a man to stand out against the vast majority of his fellows on one line of action, and sanction their worst errors on another line.

FREDERICK RYAN.

Our days are too brief for affording
Space to dispute what *no one* ever could
Decide, and *every body* one day will
Know very clearly—or at least lie still.

—Byron.

Of infallibility, in all shapes, lay or clerical, it is needful to iterate, with more than Catonic pertinacity, *Delenda est*: it must be destroyed.—Huxley.

Book Chat.

THE RELIGION OF KEATS.

THE other day we came across a statement in one of the literary reviews to the effect that English poetry was deeply tinged with religion. The writer claimed that, from Chaucer to Pope, and from Shelley to Mr. Francis Thompson, the influence of religion on the thought of our great verse writers was vastly important. Although we may be disposed to consider this too sweeping a statement—Chaucer, for instance, wearing his religion as lightly as an Italian novelist of the Renaissance—it must be admitted that there is a measure of truth in it. Nor is there any difficulty in accounting for it. The poets of a country have usually given expression to the thoughts and feelings of the majority of people of their time. Indeed, what else could most of them do? A poet, it must be remembered, is not often a great thinker, whatever Carlyle and his school may say. Scientific reasoning is for him a less vital thing than the weaving of ideas into lovely shapes and sounds. Besides, the minds of the poet and the scientific thinker pursue their course in exactly opposite manner: the one proceeds *per saltum*, by leaps and bounds—it slips a dozen intervening stages to reach the conclusion; the other proceeds by stages as intimately connected and as interdependent as the links of a chain. With the poet, his very love of metaphor, of analogy, of colored language, seduces him into using words in a way that the philosopher would deem suicidal. Take Shelley, for example. No one saw more clearly than he the true reasonableness of the Atheistic position, the emptiness of all the Theistic arguments; yet his poetry often enough sets up the impression of a vague yearning after God and immortality. After all, it is very difficult to say to what extent the references of a poet to the soul, spirit, God, immortality, are really expressions of his own religious belief, and not merely a traditional manner of appealing to the emotions of the reader.

* * *

If there is one English poet of whose poetry we can safely say that it was not influenced by religion, it is Keats. Yet he is not allowed to escape. He must be pressed into the service of superstition. His very Paganism is counted to him for righteousness. He is, we are assured, more truly religious in his most frankly material poems than many a ponderous versifier of spiritual odes. His identification of Beauty with Truth is really the Christian religion under a Platonic form. This may be so; it depends so much upon what one means by religion. If we are permitted to look upon his worship of beauty as a devotional attitude, we should not be disposed to quarrel with those who find him religious. But we bring clearness into our conceptions by discrimination, not by confusion; and, however valuable the exaltation of beauty may be as an æsthetic theory, it is hardly a religion, unless that word is allowed to mean anything we please. Now, what was Keat's feeling towards religion? His correspondence contains only a few references to religious beliefs. Immediately after the death of his brother he writes: "I will not enter into any parsonic comments on death. Yet the commonest observations of the commonest people on death are as pure as proverbs. I have a firm belief in immortality....." But this was dragged out of him in the passionate stress of a great bereavement. In the last days of his life, when he had written the noble and serene fragment, *Hyperion*, he writes to Fanny Brawne, the lady whom he loved, and who did not a little to hasten his too early death, that, for her sake, he would "wish to believe in immortality." This surely indicates a change in his belief, and synchronises with the development of his mental and æsthetic capacities. In another letter to her he exclaims: "I appeal to you by the blood of that Christ in whom *you* believe"—not "*we* believe." If, however, he had any philosophical leaning, it was towards scepticism. In somewhere near the middle of his poetic career he writes to a clergyman named Bailey, who afterwards became Archdeacon of Colombo: "You know my ideas about religion. I do not think myself more in the right than other people, and nothing in the world is provable. As tradesmen say, everything is worth what it will fetch; every mental pursuit (religion included) takes its reality from the ardor of the pursuer, being in itself nothing. Ethereal things may at least be thus real, divided under three heads—things real, things semi-real, and nothings. Things real, such as existences of sun, moon, and stars, and passages of Shakespeare; things semi-real, as love, the clouds, etc.....and nothings which are made great and dignified by an ardent pursuit." This is none the less true for being somewhat fancifully expressed. Religion is less permanent than beautiful passages in Shakespeare, less abiding than love. It is a "mental pursuit" which the increase of knowledge and intellectual dependence will gradually discredit. If "mental pursuit" be thought too dignified a name, we can apply to it what the poet said of dreams. They are—

Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;
Which is as thin of substance as the air,
And more inconstant than the wind.

It is, then, evident from his letters that Keats, like most of his

friends, had no very definite convictions as to religion. He did not openly attack the orthodox faith with acrimony and ardor like Shelley, or treat it with mordant sarcasm like Byron. He simply allowed it to go its own way. Like politics, it played no part in his life. It neither disturbed nor irritated him. No sounds from Gethsemane or Calvary came to trouble the pure and serene harmony of his perfect verse. *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, and the *Odes*—the last, perhaps, the most precious portion of his literary heritage—might have been written by some Pagan Greek of the Archipelago. Attic sunlight is everywhere. Joy of life and love of nature in her brightest moods are the dominant notes. This feeling for, and delight in, natural beauty does not, as with many other writers, represent a passionate reaction from the artificial relations of society, the hardness and brutality of every-day life. No! Keats had nothing in him of Goethe's *Wetter*. That northern malady, the *Weltschmerz*, or world-sickness, from which Byron seems to have suffered so much, could never have existed in the sunny and buoyant atmosphere his imagination created for itself.

* * *

The only evident expression of his dislike of orthodoxy is a sonnet headed *Written on a Summer Evening*. I may be permitted to quote not so much for its intrinsic value—it is a youthful production, and was not deemed important enough to be included in his first volume—but because it shows that, as a youth, he saw the futilities, the inconsistencies of religion:—

The church bells toll a melancholy sound,
Calling the people to some other prayers,
Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,
More hearkening to the sermon's horrid sound.
Surely the mind of man is closely bound
In some black spell; seeing that each one tears
Himself from fireside joys, and Lyndian airs,
And converse high of those with glory crowned.
Still, still they toil, and I should feel a damp—
A chill as from a tomb, did I not know
That they are dying like an outburnt lamp;
That 'tis their sighing, wailing ere they go
Into oblivion—that fresh flowers will grow,
And many glories of immortal stamp.

In his brother's transcript of the poems this was called a *Sonnet: Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition*. Such superstitions as these and their attendant futilities, we may be assured, did not occupy much of the thought of a youth whose brilliant poetic life was made up of scarcely four short years. They were soon consigned by him to the limbo of forgotten things, and who will say that he was not wise in thus refusing to darken his thought at the foot of Calvary? It is Donne—the lover, the man who wrote the finest "hate-poem" in any language, the poet of sublimated passion—that we take to our hearts, not the Dean of St. Paul's and composer of the *Divine Poems*. It is the Tennyson of the lyrical poems, and not *In Memoriam*, that will remain longest in the memories and affections of men. Finally, the only "mental pursuit" which death was at all preoccupied with was the quest of Beauty; and, in his concluding lines to the *Ode to a Grecian Urn*, he has given us his poetic confession of faith:—

Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ORION.

"Fairies Stand to Rayson!"

THE SUPERSTITIONS OF IRELAND.

We commented yesterday on the fate of the Tipperary cattle-driver who thought to bewitch a cow—and succeeded in landing himself in prison instead. In the course of conversation in London, yesterday, an Irish M.P. said: "Of course we do not believe in fairies, good or bad. Our religion does not permit of their existence. But we view them with toleration, and there is a good deal to be said on both sides of the question." It is that half-poetic, half-earnest desire to believe in the supernatural which leads the Irish peasantry to credit persons with the "evil eye" and the power of "overlooking." May Day Eve is the crucial time. Then, if the "good people," the "kind people," enter the open door they stay with you the whole year, and things will smile. But as belief in the good people correlates belief in the bad people, so may a man's cattle and all his possessions be bewitched by such ceremonies on May Day as that for which the Tipperary man, who was watched for, is now paying the penalty. Literary Irishmen have the strongest sympathy with, if not belief in, these superstitions. Mr. W. B. Yeats, the poet, tells how once he argued with a Galway peasant who—a rare thing in Ireland—boasted that he was an Atheist. "But," said Mr. Yeats, "you believe in fairies?" "Fairies?" said the Atheist. "Sure, fairies stand to rayson!"

—*Westminster Gazette*.

Correspondence.

CECIL RHODES: HIS CHARACTER AND CREED.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—If I were not a Freethinker I might emulate the author of the letter under this heading in last week's issue by expressing a wonder that such an absolutely pointless piece of impertinence should have been printed. The letter, which is the work either of a Christian or a sham Freethinker, contains no argument of any kind to show why we should honor Cecil Rhodes, nor any confutation of my estimate of his character. The only clear point is that Mr. Rowland desires that opinions with which he disagrees should not be published—an evidence of the sincerity of his attachment to those Freethought principles for which he professes such concern. And, as for the old tag about speaking nothing ill of the dead, Mr. Rowland must be sadly shocked every time he takes up a Freethought periodical (which, perhaps, is not often) and reads therein the criticism that is constantly directed against the alleged founder of Christianity, who has been dead a pretty long time now. Certainly it is a little strange that the "Freethinkers" who have been rushing in to complain of the evil effects on Freethought work of every democratic article, or the "wreck of Rationalism" that may ensue from peace-advocacy, are people whom one never heard of as having lifted a finger for the Freethought cause, about which they are so troubled, in any public way before.

FREDERICK RYAN.

[What is a poor editor to do when each correspondent wonders why the other's letter was printed?—EDITOR.]

RE "THE NATURE OF CONSCIENCE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is difficult to understand how "Chilperic" can find the analogy between the moral operations of a child of two or three years of age, and the mental and physical life-long experience of the "orator" and "skilled workman."

"Conscience" may be corrupted by *environment*, not "education" as misquoted by Chilperic; and, as the terms cannot be regarded as synonymous, his conclusion that "the lowest savages ought to have the finest moral discrimination" is based upon an incorrect experience.

It is surprising to find "Chilperic" admitting that "Every child is born into some community with certain moral ideas," for that is exactly the point at issue between us. Having conceded so much, why should he consider it necessary for "the child to acquire as it grows up" that which it already possesses. "Chilperic" recants to his original opinion when he states "that in the cases observed of wild children who have grown up without human companionship the moral sense has been conspicuously absent."

This may be admitted under my headings "two and three" of the actions of conscience, as it is obvious there is no assistance to development under the condition of life; but it would surely be presumptuous for any "observer" to deny the existence of the "moral sense" under the heading—viz., "the actions of the individual (child) in relation to itself." While "self-preservation" would be the only law in such a state of existence, it may yet be asserted that the innate sense of individual responsibility, common to all, irrespective of birth, environment, or education, would be present in the mind of the child, and no amount of "observation" can affirm, with any degree of certainty, that this moral sense in embryo is not associated in some undefinable manner with "instinct," and possibly even the ultimate source of it.

W. H. LEWIN.

How the C. E. S. Helps Us.

Scene: Brockwell Park, Sunday, May 11.

REV. A. J. W. (addressing his audience): Next time the Spurrutalists invite me to debate I hope they'll bring a spurrut along! (Laughter.)

OLD GENT.: Does the lecturer believe in ghosts? (Loud laughter.)

REV. A. J. W. (smiling broadly): Well, ef the gentlemen would jist introduce me to one — (Audience convulsed.)

OLD GENT.: I'll put my question in another form. Does the lecturer believe in disembodied spirits? (Audience becomes grave.)

REV. A. J. W. (with admirable aplomb): With the gentleman's permission we'll postpone that question to another occasion! (Audience becomes thoughtful.)

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

LONDON.

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

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): No lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, A lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch N. S. S.): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

HYDE PARK, near Marble Arch (West London Branch N. S. S.): Freethought literature on sale at all meetings. 11.30, No lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15, No lecture.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, Harrold Johnson, B.A., "The Paintings of Watts, R.A."

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, R. P. Edwards, "The Decay of Secularism." Members' meeting after the lecture.

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Annual Meeting—Election of office-bearers, etc; 6.30, Social meeting in commemoration of Mill and Owen.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, No lecture.

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.

"I have read with great pleasure your *Book of God*. You have shown with perfect clearness the absurdity of Dean Farrar's position. I congratulate you on your book. It will do great good, because it is filled with the best of sense expressed with force and beauty."—Col. R. G. Ingersoll.

"Mr. Foote is a good writer—as good as there is anywhere. He possesses an excellent literary style, and what he has to say on any subject is sure to be interesting and improving. His criticism of Dean Farrar's answers fully justifies the purpose for which it was written."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

"A volume we strongly recommend.....Ought to be in the hands of every earnest and sincere inquirer."—*Reynolds's Newspaper*.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited,
2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

Ingersoll's Last Lecture.

"WHAT IS RELIGION?"

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

PRICE TWOPENCE.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited,
2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

J. O. BATES, Vegetarian Health Food Stores, 42 Victoria Street, Gloucester. (List one stamp.) Freethought and Health Literature always on sale.

Deal with a Freethinker.

(Shareholder Freethought Publishing Company, Limited.)

N. S. S. CONFERENCE.

To my London Friends,

AT Whitsuntide I intend to be present at the N. S. S. Conference, and shall be glad to meet all my old friends. I shall bring with me a full set of Samples, and shall be ready to book orders for all kinds of goods at prices which will make my visit live in the memories of all those who favor me with orders. If you require Suits, Dress Goods, Boots, or Drapery, inquire for "Gott," if you don't already know me, and the meeting will be to our mutual advantage. Also let me say that, if there is a man or woman in all London who has had goods that have not given satisfaction, I shall be delighted to give them a return in money that will make them more than satisfied. Don't forget to turn up, and we will have a good time together.

Yours sincerely,

J. W. GOTT.

2 Union-street, Bradford.

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.

The Safest and Most Effectual Cure for Inflammation of
the Eyes is

Thwaites' Celandine Lotion.

Cures inflammation in a few hours. Neglected or badly doctored cases. 3 or 4 days is sufficient time to cure any case. For Sore and Inflamed Eyelids. Nothing to equal the Lotion for Dimness of Sight. Will remove Skin or Film that sometimes grows on the Eye. As the eye is one of the most sensitive organs of the body, it needs the most careful treatment.

Culpeper says in his *Herbal Book* that it is the virtues of Celandine were generally known it would spoil the spectacle-makers' trade. 1s. 1½d. per bottle, with directions; by post 14 stamps.

G. THWAITES, Herbalist, 2 Church-row, Stockton-on-Tees.

A UNIQUE OFFER.

A FREETHOUGHT LIBRARY FOR 10s. !

The only Complete and authentic Edition of the late

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S WORKS

Is the DRESDEN Edition, published by and with the consent of his family.

THIS edition consists of twelve large octavo volumes, beautifully printed on special paper, in good type, magnificently illustrated with numerous Photogravures, Etchings, Half-tones, Facsimiles, on JAPANESE VELLUM, with literary matter covering more than 7,000 Pages, and now being sold at 30 dollars (£6) per set. There are upwards of **four hundred** Articles, Lectures, Essays, Reports of Interviews, etc., on Theological, Political, Social, and Literary Subjects in this Edition, the larger portion of which is entirely unknown to English readers, and many of which now appear in print for the first time.

Many who would like to become the possessors of this collection of the writings of one of the greatest and most eloquent advocates of modern Freethought are deterred by the necessity of paying down the whole of the purchase money at once. This difficulty is now removed by the FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING COMPANY having made arrangements whereby the whole of the twelve volumes may be purchased on the instalment plan:—**10s. with order**, the remainder of the purchase money to be paid in monthly instalments of a similar sum, the books to be delivered on payment of the preliminary 10s.

This offer holds good for a limited number of sets only, and can only be completed on condition that all of the sets for disposal are subscribed for immediately.

This offer will, therefore, be held open for a few weeks only, at the expiration of which time, if the response to this announcement is not satisfactory, it will be withdrawn.

The whole cost of the 12 volumes will be, including carriage, £5 10s., or cash £5.

As no orders will be executed unless a satisfactory response to this announcement is received, all we require now is the names and addresses of intending subscribers.

REMEMBER !

(1) These books are to be obtained through the FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING COMPANY only. They are not to be obtained through ordinary booksellers, or through any other agency in Great Britain. (2) The whole of the 12 volumes will be delivered at your door on payment of the first instalment of 10s. (3) The price is less than that for which they are being sold by the American publishers. (4) This offer must be taken up **at once** if it is to be taken up at all.

Intending Subscribers must send their names, envelopes marked "INGERSOLL," to

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING CO., LTD., 2 NEWCASTLE ST., FARRINGDON ST., E.C.

A FREETHOUGHT DEMONSTRATION

IN THE MINOR

QUEEN'S HALL, LANGHAM PLACE, On Whit-Sunday,

IN CONNECTION WITH

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference.

Speeches by G. W. Foote, C. Watts, C. Cohen, Etc.

Musical Selections at 7, Chair taken at 7.30.

ADMISSION FREE.

SILVER COLLECTION.

A CHANCE FOR BOOK-BUYERS.

Freethinkers' Text-Book. Part I., C. Bradlaugh. Part II., A. Besant. Two vols. ...	4 0
Footsteps of the Past. J. M. Wheeler ...	1 6
Roses and Rue. Stewart Ross ...	2 0
Jesus and Israel. Jules Soury ...	1 6
The Sceptics of the Old Testament. E. J. Dillon ...	2 6
Origin and Nature of Secularism. G. J. Holyoake ...	1 6
Capitalist Reproduction. Karl Marx. Pub. 10s. 6d. ...	3 6
Religion of the Future. Von Hartmann ...	1 0
Isaure, and Other Poems. Stewart Ross ...	1 0
Biographies of Wilkes and Cobbett ...	1 9
Origin and Development of Christian Dogma. Tuthill ...	1 3
Religion in the Heavens. Logan Mitchell ...	1 9
Ideal Justice. H. Croft Hiller ...	1 0
The Witness of Assyria. Chilperic Edwards ...	1 6
Essays Towards a Critical Method. J. M. Robertson. 1st edition. Pub. 7s. 6d. ...	2 0
Agnostic Problems. Bithell ...	1 0
The Holy Lance. Stewart Ross ...	1 6
Crimes of Christianity. G. W. Foote ...	1 6
The Dawning Grey. (Vignette engravings.) J. H. Dell ...	2 6
Christianity and Evolution. A. B. Moss ...	1 3
The Grand Old Book. G. W. Foote ...	1 0
Hume's Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion ...	0 6
The Devil's Pulpit. Robert Taylor. 2 vols. ...	2 6
Letters on Spiritualism. Judge Edmonds ...	1 0
Effectual Reform in Man and Society. H. Travis, M.D. ...	1 0
Apostolic Records. Rev. Dr. Giles ...	2 0
Evolution of Christianity. C. Gill ...	2 0
A Few Days in Athens. J. M. Wheeler ...	1 6
Galileo Galilei. Karl Von Gehler ...	2 0
James Watson: A Memoir. W. J. Linton. (Scarce) ...	2 0
A Sketch of Morality. M. Guyau ...	1 6
Life and Mind. R. Lewins, M.D. ...	1 0
The Bottomless Pit. Stewart Ross ...	1 6
Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers. J. M. Wheeler. Pub. 7s. 6d. ...	2 6
Reminiscences of H. P. B. Countess Wachtmeister ...	1 6
Fourteen Orations. Colonel Ingersoll. (Containing some pamphlets now out of print) ...	2 6
Man and God. J. M. A. Perot ...	2 0
Natural Causation. C. E. Plumptre ...	2 0
The Agnostic Island. F. J. Gould ...	1 0
Mistakes of Moses. Ingersoll ...	1 0
Disestablish the Church. A. Besant ...	0 9
Pamphlets by Charles Watts. Vol. I. ...	1 6
Christianity and Secularism. Debate Foote and McCann ...	1 0
The Bible and Evolution. A. B. Moss ...	1 3
Volney's Ruins of Empires ...	1 6
Several volumes of bound Pamphlets (lists sent), each ...	1 6
Vcl. of <i>Freethinker</i> . 1899. Half-calf ...	7 6
English Life of Jesus. Thomas Scott ...	1 3
Paine's Miscellaneous Theological Works. (Paper) ...	0 6

All in good secondhand condition. When ordering, it is advisable to make an alternative selection, in case of books being already sold. Carriage paid on all parcels to the value of 2s. 6d. Address, BOOKS, c/o F. P. Co., 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Works by the late R. G. Ingersoll.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH. Funeral Orations and Addresses. 1s.	WHAT IS RELIGION? 2d.
MISTAKES OF MOSES. 1s.	IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.
THE DEVIL. 6d.	LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.
SUPERSTITION. 6d.	GOD AND THE STATE. 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.
THE GHOSTS. 3d.	REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.
	CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.
	CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. 1d.
	THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. 3d.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited,
2 Newcast'e-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

PECULIAR PEOPLE.

An Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills.

On his sentencing THOMAS GEORGE SENIOR to four months' Imprisonment with Hard Labor for Obeying the Bible by not calling in a Doctor to his Sick Child.

By G. W. FOOTE.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited,
2 Newcas'e-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

Recently Published. 24 pp. in cover, price 3d. (with a valuable Appendix).

Spiritualism a Delusion: its Fallacies Exposed.

By CHARLES WATTS.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited,
2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.