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# THE Freethinker

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*A creed is a rod,  
And a crown is of night;  
But this thing is God,  
To be man with thy might,  
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit,  
and live out thy life as the light.*

—SWINBURNE.

## The King's Chaplain.

THE title of this article is an Hibernicism. It should really be "the King's no-chaplain." But that looks and sounds odd, and we have sacrificed strict accuracy to appearance and euphony. The case is this. A gentleman—probably in the soul-saving business himself—has been writing to the newspapers, complaining that King Edward does not keep a chaplain on board the royal yacht. There is a doctor to look after the crew's bodies, if anything goes wrong with them, but no priest, minister, preacher, or man of God of any description, to look after the salvation of their immortal souls. The result is that Captain Lambton actually takes charge of divine service when it has to be celebrated. No doubt he gets through the job with all the proverbial dexterity of a "handy man." Yet he is only an amateur, after all; and the job requires the services of a professional. Captain Lambton has never been consecrated. He is not endowed with the Holy Ghost. Probably, being a sailor, he swears as often as he prays—perhaps oftener. There is something in the salt water, or the sea air, or the atmosphere of a ship, or whatever it is, that encourages the use of superlative epithets and other striking forms of expression. All the greater, therefore, is the need of a tame Christian on board, to dilute the nautical language down to the proper strength for a set interview with the Almighty. Besides, a parson is as necessary as a doctor. Not only is he required as a soul-saver, but he has his living to get, and an opening should be made for him somewhere. It is a sad spectacle to see a lean curate looking yearningly at the royal yacht from a distance, when he might be pursuing his trade on board of her, and enjoying a fine opportunity of becoming both fat and useful. It is clear, therefore, at least from the clerical point of view, that the King is acting improperly in sailing about without the company of a clergyman. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the King is acting quite properly from his own point of view. Not that we have any right to speak for him; only we think that something could be said if we had the right to say it.

Let us venture to suggest a few considerations. It will be conceded, we imagine, that after all that Coronation ceremony (or tomfoolery) in Westminster Abbey, following so soon upon his severe and well-nigh fatal illness, the King is very much in need of rest. Now a doctor is more conducive to his rest than a clergyman. The former would say "Take your ease, eat and drink well, keep on deck all you can, and sleep well at nights." The latter would say "Prepare to meet thy God." But we may be sure that the King is not at all anxious to meet his God, or to spend a superfluous amount of time in getting ready for the encounter. He was quite near enough to meeting his God a couple of months ago. A very

distant acquaintance will do for the next ten years. Any man, even a king, who has just narrowly escaped death, will object to being pestered with reminders of his mortality.

In the next place, it must be admitted that the King has been to church a good many times already, that he has listened to a lot of sermons, and that he has heard plenty of lessons, prayers, and hymns. He has had enough to last him for a while. What he wants now is a holiday. He should leave his land-life entirely behind him; and, as the parson is a part of it, the parson is rightly told to stop on shore. When a man is seeking new health and strength, after a very trying illness, he does not want a soul-worrier constantly at his elbow; but may very well say, with the gentleman in the Acts of the Apostles, I will hear thee at a more convenient season.

In the third place, it can hardly be assumed that the King is in love with clergymen. As a man of the world, he must be pretty well aware of what they are driving at. He must know that they pursue their profession (or "calling") for ordinary business reasons. He must recognise that they preach heaven in order to live on earth. He must have a poor opinion of them as a class, and in all probability he loves them so that he dotes upon their very absence.

Why, in the fourth place, should the King have a chaplain on the royal yacht for the sake of the crew? Sailors are seldom enamored of clergymen. They think it unlucky to have a clergyman on board. They have an idea that it means bad weather. We do not know *why*, but such is the fact. Perhaps it is a tradition that has come down from the days of Jonah. There was no peace till the prophet was thrown overboard. And it may be that sailors are still of opinion that the proper place for a chaplain is the belly of any fish that will give him entertainment.

The advocates of the clergy may object that the King has shown himself in other respects a friend of religion. Did he not declare that it was to his people's prayers that he owed his recovery? Did he not express his gratitude in consequence to Almighty God? Did he not "hurry up" his Coronation, and give the clergy a chance of signalising their services to the throne and the nation? Did he not show his opinion that he was only half a king until he had received the Church's blessing? Yes, he did so; but it must be remembered that he has a part to play as head of the Church as well as head of the State. It is a very rash assumption that his heart speaks every time he goes through a bit of public hocus-pocus with the clergy. They play the pantomime, and so does he; it is a part of the "business" of both their professions. They dispense the grace of God, and he reigns by the grace of God; but when the pantomime is over it is not astonishing that he prefers their room to their company.

For our part, we commend the King's common sense in taking his sea-trip without a ghostly companion—a person who habitually wears black to suggest a funeral, and occasionally puts on a cassock to suggest a shroud. It will be time enough to resume touch with the mystery-mongers when his holiday is over. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. King Edward is wise, in the meanwhile, to enjoy the healthier companionship of honest sailors.

G. W. FOOTE.



### The Shadow of the Cross.—III.

IT is a little to the credit of human nature—even of the religious kind that then flourished in Spain—that the proposals for the extermination of the Moriscoes were gradually replaced by the desire for expulsion. It is instructive, nevertheless, to observe that this period saw a great increase in the number of churches, monasteries, and religious houses in Spain, along with a corresponding increase in the religiosity of the mass of the people. According to Buckle, there were at this time upwards of nine thousand monasteries in Spain, besides nunneries. The Dominicans and Franciscans between them numbered some thirty-two thousand members. The diocese of Seville alone boasted of fourteen thousand chaplains. This multiplication of religious preachers, organisations, and professors not only represented a severe drain upon the material resources of the country, but also acted as a direct cause of the growth of those barbarous and vindictive feelings, the expression of which did so much to secure the downfall of Spain.

There was no doubting the religious zeal of Philip II.; but he was at least statesman enough to shrink from many of the proposals submitted to him for the settlement of the Moriscoe question. His successor, Philip III., does not appear to have had any such qualifying virtue. He was completely under the influence of his religious advisers, and under his reign the outlook of the unfortunate Moriscoes was more gloomy than ever. "It is a good work; let it be carried out speedily," was his comment upon a proposal for ridding his kingdom of heretics; and the Church was not likely to miss making the most of such a monarch. The first proposal of expulsion was framed as early as 1602, and, owing to fears of an armed rising, was a comparatively mild measure. This proposal, however, came to nothing; the matter dragged on for another seven years, until, on September 22, 1609, the fatal decree was published.

This final decree commenced with the usual declaration as to the danger to Spain in harboring the Moriscoes—first, because of their treasonable correspondence with the nation's enemies; second, because of their heresies. It was, therefore, necessary to avert the anger of God—an expression of which had been seen in the failure of the Armada against England—by expelling them the country. Within three days after the publication of the edict all Moriscoes of both sexes were to leave the kingdom, under penalty of death for disobedience. They could take with them as much portable property as could be carried on their backs, but no more. They were to remain in their homes during the three days preceding their embarkation, and after that time anyone found wandering about could be robbed by the first comer, or killed. Even here there came in an admission of the value of the Moriscoes, as, in order to preserve the sugar mills, rice crops, irrigating canals, etc., six per cent. of them were to be allowed to remain to instruct the new settlers.

There was some prospect of armed resistance to this savage edict; but the prompt massing of troops put an end to this, and the Moriscoes prepared to leave, with as much courage as they could command, a country which they had done so much to enrich. And yet armed resistance could hardly have exposed them to greater dangers than did their acquiescence. Accustomed for many years to regard the Moriscoes as people without rights, the publication of the edict of expulsion was made the signal for their wholesale robbery and destruction. The Christians sallied forth in squads, robbing and murdering those whom they encountered. One writer states that, in going from Valencia to San Mateo, he saw the roads full of dead Moriscoes. Guards were sent out to patrol the roads; but, as the number of murders showed no decrease, this measure does not appear to have met with much success.

The further application of the edict of expulsion to all parts of Spain where the Moors were resident

went on as rapidly as possible, and in all cases there were the same scenes of spoliation and outrage. Some twenty-five thousand passed from Aragon through Navarre, or over the mountains, into France, but were refused admission at first, and only finally allowed to enter under very restrictive conditions. A band of four or five thousand old men, women, and children were sent to the summit of the mountains on the Bearnese frontier, and were left with but scanty provisions. Fourteen thousand paid a sum of 40,000 ducats for admission into France, which was then refused them, with the result that on the way back the majority died of pestilence or starvation. Those who voyaged to Africa frequently never reached their destination, the crews often murdering the men and outraging the women. Those who did land on the African coast brought with them the reputation of possessing money, and this exposed them to still further dangers in their efforts to reach the Mohammedan States. It is said that, of 140,000 that sailed for Africa, upwards of 100,000 suffered death within a few months after their expulsion from Spain. Whichever way we turn there is the same story of greed, cruelty, and religious intolerance.

How many of the Moriscoes were expelled it is impossible to say with any certainty. The estimates vary greatly. The figures range as high as one million, and as low as 150,000. Llorente calculated that 100,000 perished or were enslaved, and 900,000 were exiled. Mr. Lea leans to the opinion that the number was probably about half a million. But neither the larger nor the smaller estimate alters the magnitude of the crime. The suffering is as great in the one case as in the other, and one's judgment as to the evil influence of Christianity on the destinies of Spain, can hardly be affected by a variation in statistics.

The effect of the expulsion on the material and mental life of Spain was soon apparent. It was universally recognised, says Mr. Lea, that no Spaniard brought up his children to honest industry. To become an agriculturist or a mechanic was a sign of dishonor or degradation. The result was that the Moorish expulsion crippled Spain in both its industry and its commerce. The cultivation of rice, cotton, sugar, and the manufacture of silk and paper were destroyed at a blow. The Spaniards were compelled to purchase abroad all that had been previously produced at home. Seville, before the expulsion, possessed upwards of 16,000 looms, giving employment to about 140,000 persons. Soon after, these 16,000 had dwindled to 300. Toledo possessed fifty woollen manufactories in 1580. In 1665 it had thirteen. The whole of the trade had been carried away by the Moors and established at Tunis. Toledo lost its silk manufacture, Cordova its trade in leather. "In the sixteenth century, and early in the seventeenth, Spain enjoyed great repute in the manufacture of gloves, which were made in enormous quantities..... But Martinez de Mata, who wrote in the year 1665, assures us that at that time this source of wealth had disappeared." Some of the populous and wealthiest cities in Spain were reduced to beggary; and many of the nobles had to apply to the State for grants of money, their revenues having suffered so largely by the departure of the Moriscoes. Large tracts of land were left uncultivated and ran to waste; and while agriculture was neglected in the country, in the towns in many cases a state of semi-starvation existed, it being found necessary to send troops to collect food stuffs for the relief of some of the principle centres of population.

But even more serious than the effects of the expulsion on the material prosperity of Spain was the effect on the intellectual and moral life of the nation. Mr. Lea rightly protests against the views of those writers who attribute the decadence of Spain to its foreign wars and the drain of colonisation. He points out that the wars of Louis XIV. and of Napoleon exhausted France to a much greater degree than the wars of Charles V. and Philip II. exhausted Spain; yet France recovered while Spain sank. And in point of colonisation England has



certainly *done* more than Spain ever attempted. But in France there was intellectual life, intelligent industry, arts and manufacture, and it is upon these that the recuperative power of a nation depends. But of these elements Spain robbed herself by the gratification of the bigotry and intolerance of its governors, and the very success of their efforts in suppressing heresy helped to still further increase the impoverishment of the nation. As the religious zeal of the people increased, so their material prosperity declined. It is only in the convents, said Salazar, in a memorial to Philip III., that people are not dying of hunger. Parents would give one of their daughters a dowry, and send the rest into the convents, while the sons of all classes looked to the Church or the Army as their legitimate and only honorable calling. Never had the Church been so powerful. Jews and Moriscos had been disposed of, and whatever else the Spaniards were, or were not, they were Christians. The result is best told in the words of Buckle:—

"While every other country was advancing, Spain alone was receding. Every other country was making some addition to knowledge, creating some art, or enlarging some science. Spain, numbed into a death-like torpor, spellbound and entranced by the accursed superstition which preyed on her strength, presented to Europe a solitary instance of constant decay. For her no hope remained; and before the close of the seventeenth century the only question was by whose hands the blow should be struck which would dismember that once mighty empire whose shadow had covered the world, and whose last remains were imposing even in their ruins."

I have dwelt upon the case of Spain because, as I said in the first of these articles, we are able to note there Christianity at work. We can see the country Christian and non-Christian; we can watch the gradual re-Christianising of the country, the steady suppression of heresy and of alien forms of faith, and the final expulsion of its non-Christian population; and at their departure we see vanish the real greatness and prosperity of Spain. There is no need for one to fly to far-fetched or recondite theories as to the cause of Spanish decay. Least of all need we invoke the popular superstition of racial decay, as though there were a definite limit to the life of a nation as to that of an individual. A nation is what its institutions make it. Given healthful institutions, a nation may possess immortality; but given institutions of a reverse description, and decay and dissolution are inevitable.

In the case of Spain the chief cause lies near at hand, although it is, of course, associated with other causes. But the principal cause lies in the fact that for generations Spain had been depleting itself of its best intellects and its most independent spirits. To think became dangerous; to express one's opinions—if they ran counter to authority—was to invite destruction. By a dual process of elimination and terrorism Spain had divested itself of all those elements which might have enabled it to weather the storms to which she was exposed. The whole intellectual life of Spain ran more or less to religion. The schools were crowded with peasants' sons, studying divinity, while the fields were deserted. Spain made itself the most religious country in Europe—and also the most decadent.

Finally, let it be borne in mind that all over Europe something of the same process was going on. We cannot always trace the exact influence of this; but it requires little thinking to see how deadly it must have been. In Geneva intellectual life was crippled, and suppressed in one direction, for over two centuries; in France, England, and Germany it was obstructed and stunted. No nation can go on discouraging freedom of thought and speech without leaving some mark on the national character; and those who lament the want of mental independence in the people of to-day should bear in mind that we are the children of the past, and that this is but the legitimate fruits of the policy of the Christian Churches for centuries past. What Christianity effected in Spain in the seventeenth century, it worked to effect

elsewhere, and still strives to effect even to-day. Openly or covertly, Christianity is always the enemy of enlightenment and independence. Its favorite virtue is submission; the quality on which it lays most stress, credulity. Freedom of thought and speech it may submit to; but it will give it no encouragement. What we possess in this direction has been gained in defiance of the Christian Churches; and those who would retain it must study Christianity with a lively sense of the unalterability of its qualities.

C. COHEN.

### Etienne Dolet.

1509-1546.

"Men that are free are naturally goaded to virtuous actions."—  
RADELAIS.

"Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at Truth."—  
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

EVERY year, on August 3, the French Freethinkers hold a manifestation in front of the statue of Etienne Dolet, who was convicted of heresy by the Great Lying Catholic Church in 1546 and burnt alive, to the fictitious glory of an imaginary God. His statue was erected a few years ago, notwithstanding clerical protests, on Place Maubert, the spot of his execution, almost under the august shadow of the Panthéon. Dolet's life is well worth the telling. He was born at Orleans in 1509. His intellectual life began in his boyhood at Paris. When he was at school there, a boy of sixteen, he came across a tattered volume of Cicero. It was a revelation to him. He read it morning and evening, and found in the grand old Pagan the master of his choice. For the rest of his days Cicero was his companion and his adviser. After five years at Paris, Dolet went to the University of Padua. He there formed a romantic friendship with Simon Villovanus. The early death of his friend in the opening years of Dolet's manhood was an enduring grief, overshadowing the rest of his own stormy life.

In Italy, the Revival of Learning was in full bloom. As an undergraduate, Dolet plunged into the scholarly disputes that disturbed Padua. These corresponded to the eternal feud between the Ancient and the Modern, the Conventional and the Natural, the Classical and the Romantic. In Italy, the Ciceronians were the counterpart of the Classicists. They were, it must be confessed, guilty of unparalleled pedantry and misdirected ingenuity. They even declared that no word should be used, and no idea broached, that was not found in Cicero. Erasmus launched his acidulated irony against them in a sarcastic dialogue which appeared in 1531, and which was answered by Scaliger. Dolet, faithful to his beloved Cicero, took up the cudgels. His hard hitting not unnaturally provoked the enmity of Scaliger. Dolet was not content with merely defending Cicero. He struck at Erasmus, being very emphatic and contemptuous about "The Praise of Folly." In part, Dolet's antagonism to Erasmus was temperamental. Possibly Erasmus's caustic wit offended the austere mind of Dolet, who was anything but a humorist.

Dolet became secretary to the Bishop of Limoges. Afterwards he went to Toulouse and studied law. This town, a stronghold of bigotry, forced him into rebellion. He became reckless, and his gift for epigram gave permanence to his audacity. He made a great stir by a freethinking oration. In private conversation he made no secret that his mind and conscience could find no satisfaction in the medley of superstitions that went by the name of the Christian religion. He was betrayed by a pious fellow student, and fled to Lyons.

Here Dolet was in his element. He was among friends. Lyons was full of freethinkers, poets, and printers. There were two hundred presses hard at work. Some world-renowned printers lived there. The Rue La Mercière, near the river, was given up to them. It literally gleamed with the great gilt signs hung out before each door, like the emblazoned banners of a conquering army. A griffin for Gryphius, an axe for



Dolet, and so on for the rest. Inside correctors stooped over their desks. Eminent authors passed in and out. Gryphius published learned books. He brought out the pamphlets of Rabelais, and that laughing philosopher and Dolet were his readers. Noury was the man for popular writers, and he printed "Pantagruel." Erasmus, Budé, Marot, every one of note sent their manuscripts to Lyons.

Here it was that Dolet settled and became a printer. But Lyons was not long to be a haven of rest. Dolet killed a painter in a brawl and was forced to flee to Paris to ask a pardon from the king. It is doubtful if he would have obtained it, but for the King's sister. What romance linked these two, the dainty princess and the poor scholar? Dolet saw her for the first time in the company of the King at Lyons. Ever after, her fair face shone on the horizon of his stormy life. A handful of happiness in Navarre, and they drifted apart for ever. It could hardly be otherwise. Dolet, pale, struggling, driven by wild energies, full of deep shadows and intense light, a figure etched by Fate in the Rembrandt manner, he could have little in common with the King's sister, one of the fairest figures in the most brilliant court in Europe. Dolet's belief in her influence was pathetic. In the last, sad, hours of his life, when the bloodhounds of persecution were rending him, he sent to Margaret. She, unfortunately, like himself was helpless. To her credit, it must be admitted, she did her best. The persecuted Calvin, no less than the freethinker, Desperiers, was harbored at her court. Rabelais, who did not like women, dedicated to her the third book of his *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. She richly deserved the dignified tribute from the great writer. She always held out her fair hand to the thinkers of her generation. Though all else about her be sprinkled with the poppy of oblivion, this should be remembered to her eternal credit. She was, from beginning to end, the loyal servant of knowledge, the friend of freethinkers, the fair guardian of the persecuted sons of Liberty.

Margaret helped Dolet for many years to the best of her ability. Even after his marriage she went on aiding him. His marriage does not seem to have had much effect on his career, but his love for his little son had a fatal effect on his fortunes.

Some fanatics, envious of Dolet's success, reported him as a heretic, and he was sentenced to imprisonment by an ecclesiastical Court, upon which sat the Inquisitor of Lyons, "bloody" Orry, and a delegate of the Archbishop. Dolet, however, had, as we know, a friend at the court of the King of France, and his escape was connived at. Imprudently returning to Lyons to see his little son, Dolet was arrested. He was charged with having printed prohibited books and with having denied the immortality of the soul in one of his writings, which was merely a literal translation from Plato. Plato said to Socrates:—"After your death you shall be nothing more." For translating this sentence the Great Lying Church sentenced Dolet to be tortured and to be burnt alive, and the following day this martyr of Freethought, who was thirty-seven years of age, was executed.

Fearless in death as in life, the end brought him serenity. He had a proud claim upon posterity, and when he died he was able to realise that the power of death is nought against men fenced about with love of truth.

O light of the land that adored thee  
And kindled thy soul with her breath,  
Whose life, such as fate would afford thee,  
Was lovelier than aught but thy death.

Etienne Dolet was but one of a group of men who helped to make the French Renaissance as memorable as the Italian movement. Historians have looked at the Revival of Learning as a landsman looks at the sea. To the landsman the ocean seems one huge, immeasurable flood, obeying a simple law of ebb and flow. Yet in truth we know that the oceanic movement is the product of many forces; the seeming uniformity covers the energy of a hundred currents and counter-currents. The sea is not one mass, but

many masses, moving along definite lines of their own. It is the same with the great tides of history.

The Reformation was in reality a portion of the movement of the Renaissance. It was but a theological Renaissance. It was an intellectual rebellion, unfortunately "cribbed, cabined, and confined" by religion. Luther was saner than many of the fanatics who helped him. After his death it became inimical to all forms of pleasure, and laid a hand heavier than has ever been laid on man. Dolet, Rabelais, Desperiers, and the rest of the freethinkers of the Renaissance disliked the Lutherans almost as much as they hated the Great Lying Church. The Church had become to them a deserted temple; they had turned their backs on its doors for ever. Protestantism was but a half-way house on the road to Freedom.

Men who laughed at an infallible Church were not enamored of an infallible Book. Those who recognised the injustice of absolution were unlikely to be appeased by the equal injustice of predestination. The Protestants were quite as bigoted, and almost as ignorant, as the priests. Too frequently presbyter was, indeed, but priest writ large.

By the principal Protestants of his own time Dolet was unrecognised. By Calvin he is formally condemned, along with Agrippa, as being blasphemous. In any case, what cannot be doubted is that Etienne Dolet, the friend of Rabelais, was an aggressive freethinker at a time when the Religion of Love left nobody the liberty of indifference. His action is important, and takes its rightful place in the history of Freethought.

Men like Dolet lift the race to a higher level, and dignify it by their lives and deeds. They have the highest reward it is in the power of the future to bestow. They live in the hearts and memories of the generations which follow them. Truly,

spirits are not finely touched  
But to fine issues.

MIMNERMUS.

### "An Obese Blasphemer."

MOST people will wonder to whom this not very complimentary description is applied. There is no secret about it. The person who is spoken of as an "obese blasphemer" is no common mortal. He is, in fact, of royal birth and imperial position—none other, indeed, than the King, his "most gracious Majesty," Edward VII., Defender of the Faith.

Yes, the King is an "obese blasphemer" according to certain of his Roman Catholic subjects in Ireland. He is so described in a circular which, the *Catholic* says, was recently distributed at many Roman Catholic churches in Dublin. Similar things have been said of his Majesty and circulated through other channels.

A section of his subjects somehow cannot or will not forgive him for that formal declaration against Transubstantiation. So they not only impeach him from a religious point of view, but make unkind observations upon his personal appearance. True, he is not as slim as he used to be. It was the misfortune of historic beaux to become fat and coarse in their later days. And, as we remember, a predecessor of Edward in English history was disrespectfully spoken of as a "fat Adonis of forty." After all, the present King is not more obese than many a Roman Catholic priest to be found in Irish parishes. And to be called a "blasphemer" is rather an honorable distinction. Jesus Christ was so denounced, if we may believe the Gospel histories; and there is a long list of great and noble reformers to whom the same epithet has been applied by undiscerning and inappreciative contemporaries.

Nevertheless, it is not right even for a King to be unjustly assailed. He is already of necessity more than a little handicapped by his anomalous position. We cannot suppose that in future ages of enlightenment hereditary monarchs—whether limited or not—will be tolerated. Edward VII. himself must know that he is King simply because, at the present time and under present national conditions, it is thought



advisable and convenient that there should be a King. He is not by any means the ideal head or representative of the nation and empire. He knows this well enough himself and is not deceived by the surfeit of flattery his Coronation has called forth. He is a useful makeshift, a constitutional compromise, a national expedient. The best that can be said of him is that he might be worse. The general verdict is, laconically, "He'll do." It seems almost an agreeable relief to know that he is not mentally and morally incapable, that he has human instincts not less keen than other people's, and generous impulses not inferior to those of many of his subjects. Still, he is not an institution to be everlastingly perpetuated. The continuance of British royalty depends upon the colorlessness and amiable harmlessness of its representatives. In time even these negative virtues will lose their saving power. Apart, however, from these considerations there remains the equitable principle that the King, even though he is King, should not be unjustly attacked.

The Catholic circular referred to above and similar manifestos may be justifiable as protests against the constitutional precedent of requiring oaths or declarations in regard to phases of religion from those who succeed to the throne. But they are hardly defensible as against King Edward, who had no personal choice in the matter, and individually, we believe, is as innocent of intention to offend as a newly-born babe. This is the violent way in which "parents of the Catholic poor in Dublin" are addressed in the circular:—

"This man [King Edward] has levelled at the dearest beliefs and the most cherished feelings of every Catholic the most atrocious insult which imagination could frame or language utter. He has sworn—

"[Here follows the Royal Declaration against Transubstantiation.]

"Think of it, think what you are asked to do. To parade your children in the train of an alien Monarch, who sets out on his career by swearing the most abominable falsehoods which malice could conceive, and levelling them in deadly insult against your faith and you. For you, if you are a Catholic, are the object of the vituperation of this obese blasphemer. How can we school ourselves to patience in face of such atrocious and gratuitous affront?"

Possibly it is difficult for Roman Catholics of such a bellicose disposition as those who framed this circular to exhibit patience. But at least they might try; and they might reflect that the proper course to pursue is not to rail at King Edward personally, but to adopt constitutional measures for the abolition of the Declaration.

No one, probably, except it might be some few ultra-Protestants of the *Rock* and *Kensit* type, would feel aggrieved at the final elimination of this sectarian pledge. The fact is, all such pledges in regard to any particular form of religious worship, and the whole of the religious ceremony we were treated to at the Coronation, should be abolished. We can tolerate the King and the monarchical institution as long as they seem inevitable, but there is really no reason in national polity or ordinary common sense why we should now or at any time tolerate the clerical element in matters of government.

The King ought not to be called upon to make any declaration for or against any particular Church or creed. Why should he? He is supposed to reign over the whole Empire. We permit him to *think* that he does so reign. But the British Empire embraces theologically no end of creeds—and divergent creeds, too. They can't all be true, because they are so diametrically contradictory. Then why should the monarch be called upon to pledge himself to any one of them in particular? And especially, whilst pledging himself in favor of one, should he be called upon to offensively denounce and abjure another? Personally, it is more than possible that he does not actually and intelligently care a cent about any one of them. We will do him the credit of believing that he regards the whole lot as a heap of humbug and an intolerable bore. He may think that, in a way, they are necessary, or that at least the so-called Church of England is necessary, and therefore to be endured.

They are necessary just as his own monarchical position is supposed to be necessary, and he regards one as bolstering up the other.

But, whatever his view may be, the indisputable principle remains that the monarch should not be specifically called upon to recognise one form of faith more than another, and that, if any oath or declaration is demanded at all, it should be one pledging the sovereign to deal impartially all round with every creed and ism held and professed in the Empire.

Now, if we could really believe that the Roman Catholics, who have made so much fuss over the Transubstantiation declaration, would accept this principle, we should think there was some foundation for their complaint. But there is little doubt that what they really desire is a Royal declaration against Protestantism. A neutral and impartial attitude by the Sovereign would not meet with their approval. It would fall short of their requirements, which, before everything, must include a Royal recognition of their faith. That being so, there is nothing for Freethinkers to do but to smile at the Romanist outcry, and await the arrival of that inevitable day when the Sovereign and the State will be prohibited from patronising or condemning, or in any way supporting or interfering with, any church, creed, or form of faith that may exist within the bounds of the realm.

FRANCIS NEALE.

### A Grand Opportunity.

COLONEL INGERSOLL was a splendid man and a magnificent orator. He had a genius for the platform. His eloquence was not of the pump order; it was like a fountain. He let his mind, with all its treasures derived from reading and experience, play freely upon the subject, and when the time came for speaking upon it his ideas poured forth in beautiful language. Having a heart as well as a head, he appealed to the emotions no less than the intellect; not the superficial emotions of the hour, but the eternal emotions of humanity.

During his lifetime Colonel Ingersoll's utterances—lectures, essays, articles, interviews, and speeches—were printed in various forms; but after his death his family collected them from east, west, north, and south, and published them in twelve handsome volumes under the name of the "Dresden Edition." This Edition was first placed upon the market in the usual way, and sold largely. It is now placed upon the market on the "instalment system." The price of the work is payable in a number of monthly instalments, and the whole twelve volumes are delivered to the subscriber, carriage free, on payment of the first instalment.

By arrangement with the New York publisher, Mr. C. P. Farrell—the husband, by the way, of Mrs. Ingersoll's sister—the Freethought Publishing Company is able to offer this "Dresden Edition" on the instalment system in England. The American price is \$30 (about £6), but the work is offered in this country at the price of £5 10s.; or £5 if the subscriber prefers to pay cash down and save the interest on his money. The £5 10s. is payable in eleven monthly instalments. On receipt of an order for the set, with the first payment of 10s., the Freethought Publishing Company will forward the whole twelve volumes, free of all charge, to the subscriber's door.

British Freethinkers would be glad to have the Dresden Edition at the price, and under the conditions, if they could only realise what is offered them. When we say that the volumes are *handsome* we are not speaking the language of cant and deception. We are speaking the simple truth. Type, paper, and binding are all that can be desired; and the portraits, and other illustrations, are finely executed.

A large part of the contents of these twelve volumes is quite new to English readers. Some of the "Miscellaneous" items in the last volume have not been printed before, even in America.

The Dresden Edition of Colonel Ingersoll's works forms a noble Freethought library in itself. Freethinkers who can at all afford to purchase it should do so. They should give it a position of honor in their homes, and let their children become familiar with the thoughts and sentiments of one of the grandest men who ever walked the earth.



## Acid Drops.

DR. CLIFFORD continues to "gas" in the *Daily News* on the Education Bill. He treats "citizen" and "Nonconformist" as two words for the same thing, and affects not to know of the large number of people in this country to whom the difference between Church and Dissent is the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. His letter headed "Liberty of Conscience," occupying more than two columns of our contemporary, contains the following passage: "No man is the guardian of another's conscience. The State must let that alone, and keep to overt acts; opinions, beliefs, Church relationships, are outside citizenship, and, therefore, outside the jurisdiction of Parliament." Now we venture to say—or rather we have no hesitation in saying—that this is mere cant and humbug unless Dr. Clifford is at last in favor of "secular education." Every word of his protest against the Church in education is suitable to the non-Christian's protest against Dissent in education. If the State has nothing to do with opinions and beliefs, why does Dr. Clifford want Nonconformist opinions and beliefs on religion and ethics taught in the State schools? Even if he repudiates the term "Nonconformist" in this connection, and contends that these are *Christian* beliefs and opinions, he does not extricate himself from the difficulty. Whatever adjective he attaches to them, they are still opinions and beliefs, and his argument is that with such things the State has no legitimate concern.

Mr. G. Bernard Shaw replied in Monday's *Daily News* to one side of Dr. Clifford's opposition to the Education Bill. The famous Fabian's letter was unusually serious. After a little chaff at Dr. Clifford, he proceeded to declare that "the elimination of the Voluntary subscriber, another frank acceptance by the State of the entire cost of education, is the indispensable preliminary to the transfer of the effective control of education from the Establishment Church to the whole community." Mr. Shaw goes on to say that Nonconformists are giving themselves airs of unwarranted superiority in regard to religious education. The treatment of the Dr. Beecase by the Methodist Church shows that there are Nonconformists who still believe "that members of all the other sects and most of their own are awaiting an eternity of Hell fire." Moreover, a good deal of Nonconformist enthusiasm is really of a base quality—not superior, but inferior, to the fanaticism of Lord Hugh Cecil. And, as a matter of fact, Lord Hugh Cecil does not stand for the sum of religious error, and Dr. Clifford for the sum of religious truth; indeed, there are obvious absurdities on both sides.

This will hardly be pleasant reading for Dr. Clifford, particularly in a paper that has a wide general circulation. But there is worse to come. Mr. Shaw lets out as follows on the special question of religious instruction: "The truth is that neither in religious matters nor in those departments of religious matters which we call secular can the truth be told to children at present in any English school whatsoever. Our duty to our children is clear enough. Just as we teach them that the various races and classes and colors of men have such and such customs and laws and habits differing from our own, so we should teach them that there exist in the world divers creeds and observances, theories of morals, and views as to the origin and destiny of life, and the moral sanctions of conduct. And we should add that these differences do not connote differences of what children call goodness and badness, and that quite as good men and women, and even (which they will, perhaps, find it harder to believe) just as bad men and women are to be found among 'heathens' as among their own fathers and mothers. That is all we have any right to teach children about creeds nowadays."

Dr. Clifford, the robustious but not very subtle champion of Bible reading and teaching in public schools, will find this kind of thing gall and wormwood. Had it appeared in the *Freethinker* he would have smiled at it. Appearing in the *Daily News*, it is like a slap in the face in the sight of all Israel.

A letter from an alleged "Converted Atheist" has recently been reproduced by several newspapers from the annual report of Muller's Orphan Homes at Bristol. George Muller did a public service by finding homes for friendless children; but the religious aspect of his work and the methods adopted have been repeatedly shown to be pure transparent humbug. This letter, which is vaguely said to have been received from "Staffordshire" in January, and to which no name is appended, is devoid of all evidences of genuineness. It represents "A Converted Atheist" as enclosing a P.O. order for £4 15s. 9d. as a thank-offering for his salvation. What the odd ninepence represents does not appear—perhaps it is for the salvation of his big toe. He says he has been con-

vinced of the "folly of infidelity," and admits that before his conversion he was "one of the most ignorant, stubborn, and impenitent sinners." We have only his anonymous assurance that he is any other now. If he answered to that description then, he was no true Freethinker, and Christianity is quite welcome to him at the present time.

The "heathen Chinese" has discovered a new use for missionaries. He finds he can get gratuitous legal assistance from them; so, in exchange for the law, he is prepared to (nominally) take their Gospel. The *North China Herald* states that in the past the difficulty in Foo-chow has been to find anyone willing to identify himself with the hated Western religion. But now from every side come requests from large numbers of men asking to have a "teacher" sent to their town, with the offer of a chapel free. "The request is, without exception, made in the hope of getting the foreigner, or at least the 'Church,' to take up their law cases."

Mr. Michael Davitt does not believe in the priest's infallibility in politics. Outside religion, at any rate, he meets the priest as man to man. Father Bernard Vaughan having referred too loyally to the King's illness, and the devotion of Catholics to the throne, Mr. Davitt took him to task in no mealy-mouthed fashion. The *Tablet*, indeed, protested against his strong language. Bishop Clancy, joining in the protest, observed that Father Bernard Vaughan was the "brother of an illustrious Cardinal." Mr. Davitt, however, is not frightened by press rebukes or pulpit fulminations. "If it was the brother of St. Michael the Archangel," he says, "or of the Pope of Rome, who uttered these words, I would tell him, without the slightest hesitation, that he was talking cant and repulsive rubbish in the spirit of an English flunkey."

A new form of entertainment is provided for the convicts in Dartmoor Prison. They are treated to lectures on various subjects in the chapel. Some of the lecturers, we read, possess in a high degree the gift of humor. We should hardly imagine, though, that this gift is common to the lecturers supplied by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. There are no jokes in the New Testament, and only a few very grim ones in the Old Testament.

*La Croix* (*The Cross*), one of the principal organs of the Church and Army combination in France, has hundreds of thousands of readers—most of whom must be half fit for asylums. This journal's explanation of the defeat of the so-called Nationalist party at the last elections is very simple. Satan reigns over France, the Republican majority was returned by a sort of witchcraft, and M. Combes (the Premier) has sold his soul to the Devil.

Protestant Missionary Societies have done their best to impress the English people with the belief that all the "heathen" are little better than devils in the form of human beings. Travellers who are not missionaries, however, have done a great deal to correct this absurd impression. A writer in the *Daily News* gave an interesting account of "The Land of the Shah." The following passage is well worth pondering: "The Persian character is a noble one, including virtues not sufficiently striven after by Western nations. Hospitable, obliging, and particularly well disposed towards foreigners, the Persian shines most of all in family life. It is a sphere in which the Briton thinks himself admirable, but even he may learn from the land of the lion and the sun. Not only is the Persian kind and indulgent to his children, but his respect for his parents is Oriental in the best sense. Rarely will he venture to sit down in the presence of his father, whom he addresses as 'master.' His mother's wishes are laws to him, and the possibility of leaving her to starve, as unhappily men sometimes do in England, would fill him with horror. In spite of what has been often said of the subjection of Mohammedan women, the Persian mother is always the most important member of her household, a fact which does not prevent the grandmother from being treated with veneration. Unlike the British and Americans, the Persian does not consider his mother-in-law a fit subject for disrespectful jests. He desires her presence, which he considers a safeguard for his wife. Slavery in Persia is as little of an evil as such an infringement of natural rights can be. The serfs are regarded as confidential servants, and often married to their masters' children. Well and respectfully treated, they seldom abuse the confidence placed in them, and should they err the greatest punishment that can be inflicted on them is to set them free, and so force them to earn their own living. A Persian may give a slave to a friend, but he will not sell one till he has parted with the shirt from his back. Slaves being so fortunate, it follows that free servants are the same. A wet nurse is regarded as



a second mother, and usually pensioned for life. Indeed, a rich person has usually a host of pensioners—relations and old servants—and though there are no workhouses and no charity organisation in the country, deaths from starvation are unknown, unless famine afflicts the land. The Persian extends almost equal tenderness to his horse."

Dr. Temple, according to *Truth*, will soon retire from the archbishopric of Canterbury, on account of his age and infirmities. Should he do so, he will enjoy a pension of £7,000 a year, with the Palace at Canterbury as a residence. This would be a nice, quiet, comfortable way of ending his earthly pilgrimage, and preparing for his final emigration to heaven. Nobody wants to hurry that last adventure—not even an Archbishop.

The Canterbury correspondent of the London News Agency contradicts the announcement in *Truth*. He declares that the rumor of Dr. Temple's approaching retirement is "absolutely without foundation." Very likely this correspondent is right. Even a tottering old Archbishop is naturally loth to give up the difference between £7,000 and £15,000 a year.

Archbishops are a long-lived fraternity. The conditions of their existence seem to be favorable to a prolonged absence from heaven. Six out of the twenty-eight Archbishops during the last four hundred years have been octogenarians. Fourteen out of the twenty-eight reached the age of seventy. Dr. Temple is in his eighty-second year.

There is a vacant canoury at Worcester Cathedral, and several newspapers have erroneously stated that it is in the gift of Bishop Gore. The four stalls at Worcester are really in the gift of the Crown, and Mr. Balfour will, we suppose, in his superior and bored fashion, appoint the new Canon. The stipend is £750 a year with an excellent house and garden. This is attractive—better, at any rate, than retirement at Tiverton Workhouse and the donning of pauper clothes.

A Low Church paper—*The News*—says these "overpaid posts of Cathedral dignity" are the "weak places in the Church of England." We beg to differ. We should say that they are the strong. If it were not for these and similar tempting baits, the Church would be shorn at the present day of many of its shining intellectual ornaments. It is only these inducements and a sort of mental compromise that enable the Church to boast of many of her most gifted sons.

"Providence" has no discrimination in a thunderstorm. Aldenham parish church has been struck by lightning, and the spire practically destroyed.

Died in the pulpit. Thus the Rev. Alfred Moon, pastor of the Congregational Church, Kelvedon, Essex, terminated his career. He was but a middle-aged man, and was apparently in good health when he went to preach to his former congregation at Newmarket. After giving out the hymn previous to the sermon, he fell forward in the pulpit and died immediately.

More Providence. The Japanese island of Tori Shemo has been destroyed by a volcanic eruption. There were 150 inhabitants, and no trace of them can be found. A great tidal wave has destroyed a large portion of the city of Atlanta, and inflicted much loss on many smaller towns on the Mexican Pacific coast.

The clerical party in Brittany had a curiously brave way of opposing the force sent by M. Combes, the Premier, to compel respect for the law. The ignorant and fanatical, if well-meaning, peasants were worked up to fever-heat and placed behind barricades to defend the nuns of the Holy Ghost and other interesting "sisters." The principal weapons placed at their service were barrels of putrid matter, which were conveyed to the upper storeys of convents, to be thrown over the magistrates, the military, and the police as they approached the buildings. This dirty sort of opposition is only too characteristic of the party of religion in France.

Several months ago Mrs. Wolff, the wife of a German missionary, was murdered by natives in New Britain. Recently a German expedition was sent against them to exact vengeance. The native village was surprised in the night, and all the blacks were killed. Men, women, and children met the same fate. The whole tribe was wiped out. Such is Christian "charity" nearly two thousand years after Christ.

We were sorry to see Lord Rosebery indulging in the common cant of the Coronation, and talking about laying the crown upon the altar and asking the divine sanction for our empire. Intellectually we believe Lord Rosebery is above this nonsense. We suppose he thinks he must stoop to it for political reasons.

At the half-yearly meeting of the Great Western Railway Company a memorial was presented by Mr. Strickland from 1,793 shareholders and stockholders, representing two millions of capital, against excessive goods traffic on Sunday, and urging the abandonment of special passenger trains on that day. The Chairman, however, preferred the interests of the Company to the interests of piety. He observed that Sunday was the most convenient day for members of the dramatic profession to travel, and it was necessary to give reasonable accommodation to people who wished to travel.

The Lord should feel reassured about the future of what is called emphatically *his Day*. It has now received the distinguished patronage of the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland. Recently there was a church parade of cyclists at Alnwick, and it was decided to hand over the amount of the offertory to the local District Nursing Association. The Duchess of Northumberland, however, declined to authorise the acceptance of the money "as the Duke and herself much dislike this form of Sunday entertainment." Whether it is Sunday cycling or the church parade of cyclists that is thus condemned does not seem quite clear; but at any rate, after this pronouncement by their Graces, the bikes all round that neighborhood may be expected to remain unused on the Lord's Day. It is, of course, of no consequence that this is the day when their owners, as a rule, have most leisure to use them.

King Edward follows Queen Victoria in the matter of Sunday music. The following order has been issued to the two Guards regiments: "Whenever the Court is at Windsor, in whatever month of the year, the bands of the two regiments will be required to play on the Terrace on Sundays. In the absence of the Court one band (in forage caps) will be required to play on Sundays during the months of June, July, and August."

A protest on "the profanation of God's Holy Day of Rest" has been issued by the clergy and ministers of Llandudno. The Bishop of Bangor heads the list of signatories, of whom there are about a score. The protest complains that the Lord's Day is given over by a number of people wholly to the world. "Divine worship is neglected, and the day is turned into one of toilsome pleasure-seeking and excitement."

What on earth does the Bishop of Bangor and the rest of them think that people go to Llandudno for? Do they go in order to attend church or chapel? Perish the thought. They would never pay excursion fares and put up with extortionate charges at hotels or apartments in order to praise the Lord at this Welsh seaside resort. They go for the sake of pleasure and healthy enjoyment. And if Sunday comes along, they make as much of it as they can—as the lodging-house people do out of the visitors. The Bishop of Bangor has his own little axe to grind, of course; but the inhabitants of Llandudno, or such of them as live upon tourists, ought to hold him a bit in check. They will be bigger fools than we take them to be if they allow their business to be interfered with by the black-coated, white-choked brigade, who would probably be disowned by the God whose name they make use of.

A persecuted, but still defiant, tradesman is Mr. Jacob Popp. He is a respected, honest, fair-dealing tobacconist and newsagent at High Wycombe. But the people who take upon themselves to protect the Lord's Day—as if the Lord could not do it himself if he wanted—have been persecuting Mr. Popp. For eight months they have been continually summoning him for Sunday trading. The "beaks," with painful monotony, have been continually fining him, so that altogether he has paid £26 in fines and costs.

Still, he does not mean to close his shop on Sunday. Since last December his shop has been under the observation of the police, who count his customers and mark their purchases, and every alternate Saturday since he has responded to two summonses for his previous Sunday's transgressions. The penalty has invariably been 5s. and 10s. costs, with the alternative of several days' imprisonment. Mr. Popp would rather comply with the Act, and do two hours in the stocks, but the Bench will not consent. The other Saturday a majority of the magistrates, regarding the prosecution unfavorably, reduced the fine to 1s. and the costs to 4s. Mr



Popp has just been presented with a cheque for £9 5s. from sympathisers, so that at the rate of fining the sum would last nine months. It will all depend upon who is on the Bench. The subscribers have promised more when the cheque is exhausted.

The persecution is disgraceful; even the magistrates seem to be getting sick of it. How in the name of all that is rational can the supposed Maker and Governor of the Universe be disturbed by the Sunday sale of Mr. Popp's harmless commodities. This sort of thing makes out God to be as big a fool as the parson and the beak.

A bright young *littérateur*—one of J. K. Jerome's young men—contributes to a contemporary a smart little account of "The English Sunday in Paris." He is now on the Parisian press, and looking back to earlier days, he says:—"There is only one London and it is the greatest city in the world, but its Sunday is a day of expiation, of misery, and of incentive to suicide."

In a symposium on the proper observance of Sunday, three representative men—an Anglican clergyman, a Roman Catholic priest, and a Dissenting minister—alike favor a less Puritanical and more liberal utilisation of the Sunday as a "day of rest"—meaning thereby the true rest of recreation.

The police summoned two Cowes tradespeople for Sunday trading. The articles sold were perishable goods, and were principally purchased by yachtsmen before 10.30 in the morning. Fortunately the magistrates were more sensible than the police. The Bench dismissed the summons.

King Edward has no Sabbatarianism on board the royal yacht. Instead of riding at anchor last Sunday, and waiting for Monday, he steamed northward and stopped for an hour in Douglas Bay, after which he steamed northwards again in the direction of Scotland. We expect to find this desecration of the blessed Sabbath denounced by the Free Church Councils, and perhaps by the Evangelical section of the Church of England. We don't suppose, however, that their denunciations will have much effect on the King. His Majesty is likely to go on enjoying himself to the end of the chapter.

The curate in charge of Swanscombe Parish Church, which was recently struck by lightning and burned down, seems to be a thankful sort of person. Nothing, apparently, comes amiss to him. He sees the "hand of God in the disastrous fire," and improves the occasion by asking the parishioners whether they had made as much use of their church as they might have done. Of course, he might just as well have asked the Lord whether the best use he could make of his own temple was to burn it down.

According to Dr. Awdry, the Bishop of South Tokyo, the Japs are far away from conversion to Christianity. They are willing, he says, to admit that "it is something good for criminals and other low and debased sections of the community." Probably this is in view of the hell-fire doctrine of which they have heard. Otherwise they are calmly critical and largely indifferent. "There is no attitude," says Bishop Awdry, "more unfavorable to humble reception of religion than that of a critic. It is partly because of the existence of this critical material spirit that we are anxious not to be in a hurry to call into being a Japanese hierarchy."

"Humble reception of religion," indeed! What does this Bishop missionary to the Japs want? Does he expect them—smart, cultured, wide-awake people as many of them are—to accept this Western superstition on their bended knees, with "bated breath and whispering humbleness?" If he does he will be sadly disappointed—as he half admits that he is. There is little hope of Christianity making headway in cultured Japanese circles, and to this fact the Bishop of Tokyo bears indirect testimony.

Some silly person has written to the *Spectator* suggesting that, "as the Wesleyans are about to establish their headquarters almost within the precincts of Westminster Abbey, the Dean and Chapter of Westminster should offer to two of the ruling body of the Wesleyans—say to the President and Vice-President—honorary stalls in the Abbey with all the rights and privileges attached thereto." Anyone with an atom of sense would take this to be either mere idiocy or something "writ sarkastic." But the sapient editor of the *Methodist Times* takes it seriously and solemnly explains that the Connexion has no Vice-President, and the President is appointed simply for one year.

The ancient festival of St. John the Baptist takes place this week in the outskirts of Vienna at Brunnlweise, where

St. Agnes is popularly believed to have appeared. This year is the 150th anniversary of the Small Lottery "so dear to the hearts of the people and so bound up with superstition." The women seized with a passion for this speculation "spend a great part of the day in the Churches praying for success."

The editor of a weekly newspaper in Illinois has begun the publication of the Bible as a serial. No doubt it will be new to most of his readers. But we rather fancy that long before he has got through the Pentateuch his paper will be pitched out of many a decent home as being unfit for family reading.

Side by side with an announcement that the York coroner, commenting on the prevalence of suicide in that district, called upon the clergy and ministers to warn people against the sin of self-murder, there appears the statement that a Roman Catholic priest shot himself dead near Southport.

Old Dowie is going for General Booth, of the Salvation Army, hot and strong. His *Leaves of Healing* contains this threat: "And we hereby give plain and clear notice to General Booth and all concerned that we are now going to answer the false attacks that for months past have been rained on our heads in Europe and in America by the officers and *War Cry* of the Salvation Army. The time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God, which has been made the headquarters of a band of cruel oppressors in the superior officers of the Salvation Army." Trouble is, therefore, brewing, and we should not be surprised if Mrs. Carrie Nation, the Saloon Wrecker, does not have a hand in it. She has become the representative of Old Dowie in Kansas.

Noah's Ark was a very big craft. Being an imaginary ship, it was easily made of the largest dimensions. In English measure it was 550 feet long, ninety-three feet wide, and fifty-five feet deep. It was a three-decker, like the old wooden battleships that are laid up in our southern harbors. It took a hundred years to build. Even the *Great Eastern*, which astonished everybody in its day, was not as big as the sailless and rudderless tub that accommodated Noah's wonderful menagerie. But bigger vessels are built nowadays, at least as far as length is concerned. The *White Star liner, Cedric*, launched the other day at Belfast, is 700 feet long, though her beam is seventy-five feet (eighteen feet less than the Ark), and her depth forty-nine feet (six feet less than the Ark). Probably the man who wrote the story of the Flood, if he could be alive again to behold the *Cedric*, would have a fit on the spot, and go back to the dead in a frightful hurry.

It is suggested in the *Christian* that the work of Agnostic reformers amongst the outcasts and others of the poor (acknowledged by Dr. Robertson Nicoll the other week) is simply a "social plagiarism." It is said that these Agnostic workers are in reality imbued by Christian sentiments, association, and influence. They do this work because, whether they admit it or not, they are actuated by Christian principles.

What nonsense! Is there no desire, *can* there be no desire to alleviate the lot of one's fellow-creatures apart from this boastful Christianity which is still unknown or unheeded on vast sections of the globe—which is largely discredited even where it is *best* known, which pretends that altruism cannot exist apart from its ridiculous doctrines, and that all human sympathy and self-sacrificing efforts for others are confined to those who accept its creeds. The world is wide; Christianity dominates but a small proportion of its inhabitants when compared with the myriad adherents of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Mohammedanism. Human sympathy exists everywhere, and its best efforts are displayed when it is disassociated from religious dogmas and especially from Christian cant.

Translations of the Bible are sometimes like the Psalmist's body—fearfully and wonderfully made. "Judge not, that ye be not judged," being rendered too literally into an Indian idiom, came out as, "Do not justice, lest justice be done to you." Perhaps the worst case of all was that in which the word "God" in the Bible was rendered in Chinese by a word which means *stinking fish*. Of course the same difficulty applies to hymns. A young Hindu was entrusted with the task of translating "Rock of Ages" into one of the native dialects.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee,

came out as follows:—

Very old stone, split for my benefit,  
Let me absent myself under one of your fragments.



There seems to be a regular campaign carried on against the FREETHINKER. We do not know exactly in what quarter to look for our enemies, though they are probably bigoted Christians. What we do know is that a movement of some kind is going on in "the trade." Several newsagents, some of them important wholesale agents, have lately refused to supply the FREE-THINKER to their customers. Recently we have received many letters from persons in Edinburgh asking where they can obtain this journal there, now that Messrs. Menzies have struck it off their list. May we ask our friends to do all they can to counteract this insidious persecution? Small newsagents, whose wholesale agents will not supply them with this journal, are requested to communicate with the Manager at our publishing office, who will in every case make some arrangement whereby the FREETHINKER will reach them.

#### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

September 7 and 14, Athenæum Hall, London; 21, Liverpool; 28, Birmingham. October 5, Glasgow; 12 and 19, Athenæum Hall.

#### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 31, m., Kingsland; a. and e., Brockwell Park.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

CONSTANT READER.—Pleased to hear from you as "a wholesaler in the city for over thirty years," and glad to see the *Freethinker* on your trade list. You are wrong, however, as to our terms of supply. We have always given twenty-seven (not twenty-six) to the quire, and returns are only now limited to six (not three) in the quire. For the most part they have hitherto been practically unlimited, but it became necessary to make some restriction. Has your collector misinformed you? Thanks for your personal good wishes.

A. R. GRANT.—The handiest book on the subject in English is Dr. J. K. Ingram's *History of Slavery and Serfdom*, published by A. & J. Black, price 6s. Dr. Ingram is a Positivist. We think he rather over-estimates the services of Christianity in the abolition of slavery. But he writes as a scientific historian, he is on the whole very impartial, and his book is full of sound information. The author's *History of Political Economy* is also an excellent work.

G. P. DILKIN.—We are answering your letter far from books of reference. If our answer is not sufficient for your purpose, you can write to us again for further elucidation. (1) John Wesley did write against the American "rebellion" which led the way to the establishment of the "great Republic of the West." His letters and pamphlets on that subject are included in his Collected Works. (2) Wesley says in his *Journal* that those who give up witchcraft might as well give up the Bible altogether. (3) Wesley was not a friend of slavery. You have been misled on this point. He denounced it as "the sum of all villainies."

SEVERAL answers to correspondents stand over unavoidably till next week.

AGNOSTIC.—Charles Bradlaugh always called himself an Atheist. He declined to call himself an Agnostic. He did not say "there is no God." He said that there was no intrinsic meaning in the three letters forming the English name of "the deity." Words were not things, but symbols. It was all a question of definition. Whoever asserts the existence of "God" is bound to state what he means by the term. Without a definition it cannot be the subject of any profitable inquiry or debate. Charles Bradlaugh's position, for the rest, was that he had never met with any definition of "God" that was not contradicted by the facts of experience. We have the honor to agree with him.

THE CAMBERWELL FUND.—Silex, 2s. 6d.

Mr. J. FAGAN desires to notify Branch Secretaries that he has removed to 37 Danbury-street, N.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason (Oregon)—Public Opinion (New York)—The Ledge (New Denver)—Portsmouth Evening News—Two Worlds—Humanitarian—Truthseeker (New York)—Blue Grass Blade—Newtownards Chronicle—New Century—Leicester Reasoner—Boston Guardian—Salisbury Times—Lynn News—The Crescent—Truth Seeker (Bradford)—Friedenker—Gravesend and Dartford Reporter—Daily News—Malvern Gazette.

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.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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., and not to the Editor.

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

#### Sugar Plums.

LONDON Freethinkers should note that the Athenæum Hall (73 Tottenham Court-road) will be reopened for Sunday evening Freethought lectures on September 7. Mr. Foote will be the lecturer on that occasion, and also on the following Sunday. His subjects will be announced in our next issue.

Handbills of the Athenæum Hall lectures will be printed during the winter season. Friends who are able and willing to distribute them to advantage will please apply at the *Freethinker* office for as many as they require. A postcard will do when a personal visit is impossible or inconvenient.

After his two Sunday evenings at the Athenæum Hall, to set the ball rolling there, Mr. Foote pays a visit to Liverpool. He is engaged to lecture at the Alexandra Hall on Sunday, September 21, and arrangements will be made, if possible, for a Saturday evening lecture in a large public hall in the heart of the city, to which the admission would be free. On the following Sunday (Sept. 28) Mr. Foote delivers two lectures for the Birmingham Branch in the magnificent Town Hall, which has been specially engaged for this occasion. On the following Sunday (Oct. 5) he lectures in Glasgow, and will doubtless meet a strong rally of his Scottish friends.

Owing to our Editor's absence from London—this week's issue of the *Freethinker* being seen through the press by Mr. Francis Neale—our Monday's and Tuesday's postbags will have to be dealt with in next week's issue. It is necessary to mention this fact in order to prevent gratuitous disappointment and misunderstanding. The Editor's pen is fairly busy in our columns, but he is wielding it for the present in healthier surroundings than London can afford, with a view to bracing himself for a big winter's work.

Having reprinted Ingersoll's *Why Am I an Agnostic?* in a complete form at the reduced price of twopence, in the hope that it will find a more extensive circulation in this form, the Freethought Publishing Company is now reprinting Ingersoll's *What Must We Do To Be Saved?* at the same price, and with the same object and expectation. Printed in new type on good paper, and extending to forty pages, this pamphlet will be almost a miracle of cheapness, considering that, at the very best, it only appeals to a limited public. It is one of Ingersoll's raciest and most effective utterances, and Freethinkers who take the trouble to circulate it judiciously amongst their friends and acquaintances will be doing a real service to Freethought.

Now that the Freethought Publishing Company is doing its own printing on its own premises, a constant stream of fresh publications will be poured forth. Several important things are on the stocks and will be announced in due course. We hope to be able to make a definite announcement of one of very considerable importance in our next issue.

Publishing businesses, especially when they do their own printing, require a much larger capital than ordinary businesses. We hope our friends will bear in mind, therefore, that the Freethought Publishing Company has still Ordinary Shares to allot. Application for these should be made to the Secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C. A fresh accession of capital would be most serviceable in view of the work mapped out for the immediate future. No appeal has been made in this respect for some time. The fact is, the Board was waiting for the opportunity of fresh enterprise, which has now arrived.



Mr. George Meredith has been elected Vice-President of the London Library in place of the late Lord Acton.

The Leicester *Reasoner*, in addition to an excellent article by its editor, Mr. F. J. Gould, contains an interesting contribution from Mr. J. Arthur Fallows, M.A., a writer of quite exceptional ability and knowledge.

The New York *Truthseeker* refers to a question recently raised by Judge Waite as to whether any noted Freethinker like Paine questioned the personal existence of Jesus Christ. It mentions, as throwing some light on the subject, that in an article by Mr. Francis Neale in the *Freethinker* of July 26, a letter is quoted from Paine to Elihu Palmer, the author of *Principles of Nature*, in which the date reads thus: "Paris, February 21, 1802, since the *Fable of Christ*." There seems, says the *Truthseeker*, to be no doubt that in his later years, after he had read and reflected more than when he wrote the *Age of Reason*, Paine regarded the story of Christ as a myth or a zodiacal allegory.

### Help for the Self-Helping.

THE Camberwell Branch of the National Secular Society has a long and honorable history. For nearly twenty years it has provided regularly Sunday lectures, and occasional week-night lectures, in the Secular Hall, New Church-road. During the summer months it has carried on open-air propaganda in Brockwell Park, at Station-road, and on Peckham Rye. A vast amount of work has been cheerfully performed by its officers and committee. They have also often taxed themselves financially to meet the Society's expenses.

During the period covered by the South African war, which has been so injurious to all advanced movements, the Branch has naturally suffered from a diminished income. One result is that rent is owing to the Secular Hall Company, the non-payment of which would create serious difficulties.

Knowing all the facts of the case, and being confident that this Society deserves hearty support, I have undertaken to raise for it (if possible) the sum of £50. This would enable it to face the next season's work, in September, free from debt and sanguine of greater prosperity in the immediate future. A breathing time would also be gained for arrangements whereby the Secular Hall—the only place of the kind at present owned by Freethinkers in London—might be secured in perpetuity to the Freethought movement.

It should not be difficult to raise this £50. London Freethinkers alone could provide it. But the appeal is not confined to them. Freethinkers throughout the country should be interested in maintaining one of the few halls belonging to the Secular party.

Cheques or Postal Orders should be sent to me *crossed*, and will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. I hope the response to this appeal will be prompt as well as generous, so that the Fund may be closed at the end of August.

G. W. FOOTE.

(President, National Secular Society.)

2, Newcastle-street,  
Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

### Meeting of the Secular Hall Company.

The Eighteenth General Meeting of the South London Secular Hall Company was held on the 20th inst., when the resolution proposed by the late Secretary, Mr. Chas. Griggs, "That the property be placed on the market to be sold without reserve," did not meet with the approbation of the shareholders.

The shareholders considered that the Camberwell Branch of the N. S. S. was hopeful, with the kind assistance rendered by the Society's President, Mr. G. W. Foote, of weathering the storm, the time had not yet come to surrender the home that had cost so much self-denial and hard work in the past to acquire.

Later in the evening Mr. R. Young reported the recent decease of Mr. Angus Thomas, one of the founders of the Hall. The shareholders unanimously resolved to tender Mrs. Angus Thomas their sincere condolence in her sad bereavement.

T. WILMOT, Secretary.

### Book Chat.

THREE pamphlets have reached us from Mr. Malcolm Quin, of the Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Mr. Quin is a minister of Positivism, and a man of elevated character and intellectual distinction. According to Comte's teaching, it is wrong to make personal profit by the advocacy of opinions; which is a counsel of perfection not easy to follow in the present state of society, for whoever advocates unpopular opinions, unless he enjoys an independence, is likely to find that the slender reward of such advocacy is the only means left him of keeping body and soul together; and, of course, it is difficult to serve any cause without keeping alive in some fashion. Mr. Quin, we believe, has a certain modest income assured him by the Positivist body. He therefore took to issuing pamphlets gratuitously. But he found it was much easier to get them into circulation through the ordinary trade channels; so he put a price upon them, with the understanding that the profits, if any, should accrue to the circulation fund, or be available for ordinary Positivist objects.

The first pamphlet of the three (price threepence) is entitled *An Indian Positivist*. It is an eloquent sermon on Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, a Hindu Positivist, who was forced back by British rule upon Hinduism, which he ceased to hold as a theology, but clung to as a patriotism. Mr. Quin's peroration, if he will allow us to use so invidious a word, contains perhaps the whole moral of his discourse. "England owes to India," he says, "a mission of liberty—liberty not merely in the political sense, but in the deeper sense of that spiritual enfranchisement on which all political freedom eventually rests. And when true and free preachers of our Faith go to India—or, better still, when they arise from the ranks of her own people—they will, we may be sure, invoke the spirit of this early Indian Positivist as one of the patrons of their great enterprise. He has died, leaving his country, as it might seem, nerveless, silent, prostrate—still dominated by an ancient religious system which, great as it once was, has spent its best force, and is still held helpless beneath the yoke of an alien Power. But Humanity has arisen. Auguste Comte has proclaimed Her to the world. The Religion of love and freedom—even now amidst the revived arrogance of empire, and while the cries of the battle-field are yet ringing in our ears—is stirring in men's hearts a prophetic impulse; and from the working of this high impulse—unless the vision and the force of progress have gone from our grey earth for ever—the empires of the world shall perish and the Church of the world shall arise in their stead."

\* \* \*

Mr. Quin's second pamphlet (price threepence) is entitled *The Patriot Boers*. It contains the sermon he preached in the Church of Humanity on Sunday, July 6, 1902, at "a Requiem for the Citizens of the Transvaal Republic and Orange Free State who died defending their country against British aggression." Many persons, who do not think the South African problem was quite as simple as Mr. Quin presents it, and do not agree with him that valor ceases to be valor when it is displayed in a "wrong" cause, may nevertheless applaud the noble and steadfast courage of the Boers who fought for the independence of their Republics—though that, perhaps, was not all that some of them were fighting for—and join in a tribute of sympathy and honor over the named and nameless graves of those who were slain in the struggle. That tribute is paid by Mr. Quin in language of sincere eloquence. Liberty and patriotism, he says, are amongst the great interests consecrated by the Church of Humanity, and "the object of the war on the part of the two Republics was the defence of their national liberty." "I repeat," Mr. Quin says, "that we are not eulogists of the Boers. We are not apologists of their religious temper, their methods of government, their intellectual characteristics, or their industrial habits. They have, doubtless, at least as many defects as Englishmen or Frenchmen. But we are honoring the men of the two Republics who died to save their country, and we honor them in love and justice."

This is eloquently said, and the surviving Boers should be grateful—on behalf of the dead. But it is rather hard on all the British soldiers who fell in South Africa that not a word of sympathy should be spared them. They too died for their country in their own fashion. How is the individual soldier to decide the merits of international quarrels? His business is to fight his country's enemies when ordered to do so. Were the army to decide whether it should fight or not, the army would command the nation, instead of the nation commanding the army.

Another point of criticism may be noted. Is it really true



that all the voices raised against Great Britain in regard to the South African war were "inspired by Humanity?" We wish we could think so. It would give us a better hope for the future of civilisation. But what are the facts? The Anglophobe party in France and Germany are against this country *always*—no matter what the occasion or the circumstances. It is pretty much the same in America. And, if the truth must be told, there was something exquisitely comic in the attitude of the American who attended one meeting to denounce British aggression in South Africa—where the British had *some* position and interests—and then attended another meeting to promote the extension of American blessings to the Philippine Islands, where America had no position and interests at all except those of ghastly purchase or high-handed conquest.

Mr. Quin's third pamphlet is a "free" one. It contains a poem, "Pour Auguste Comte," by M. Raoul Gineste, which appeared last year in the *Nouvelle Revue*; with "a free English version" by Mr. Quin himself. It is impossible to translate French verse accurately into English verse. Mr. Quin has had to sacrifice the meaning of the original in some places. But he has preserved the basic substance and general spirit, and produced an excellent poem of his own on the Frenchman's foundation. Here are a few lines:—

To Spouses said he: joy and triumph gain  
Those who new life in children's lives obtain.  
Man, be the manly stay; and Woman, give  
Life to thy babes that thou complete mayst live.  
Above all, love. Loveless is worthless eye.  
Love is the warm and joyous sun, the day,  
All azure-clad, whence smiles and gladness come.  
It lends enchantment to the humblest home.  
It drives out care, and ends affliction's harm.  
The soul of song it is, the welcome warm,  
The arm which, when o'erweighted, bears us up,  
The good Samaritan who brings his cup.  
Yea, Love is Life—the depths in whose profound  
The endless, fruitful Infinite is bound.

We do not quote these lines as the best, but as those that will appeal to the greatest number of readers. The whole poem is well worth reading, and all who wish for copies should write to Mr. Malcolm Quin, at the Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place, Newcastle-on-Tyne. It would be graceful if they enclosed a stamp for the postage.

### Septicism and the French Revolution.

"Maximilian Robespierre, the great citizen of the Rue Saint Honore, did truly have an attack of destructive fury when the Monarchy was concerned, and he writhed terribly enough in his regicidal epilepsy; but as soon as the Supreme Being was mentioned, he wiped the white foam from his mouth and the blood from his hands, put on his blue Sunday coat with the bright buttons, and attached a bouquet of flowers to his broad coat-lapel."—HEINE, *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*.

EVERY Freethinker must rejoice at the decisive overthrow of the enemies of the French Republic, and at the return, in even greater strength, of the Radicals, in the teeth of the opposition of the Church, the Army, and the Aristocracy.

The *Spectator* is in tears about it. In an article entitled "Anti-Clericalism in France" the writer laments that "many considerations will tempt them [the Radicals] to enter upon a bitter anti-clerical campaign. They are, to begin with, deeply irritated by finding that the priests everywhere looked upon them askance, and in many places used their whole influence, occasionally in a very rash manner, to keep them from being returned." Yet, further on, the writer, assuming an air of innocent surprise, says: "We have often been asked to explain why Liberals in France so frequently assume this attitude towards the Church; and no doubt it is, at first sight, not a little puzzling. Naturally, one would think a French Radical would be the most tolerant of mankind.... He should by all *à priori* conclusions be a Gibbon, to whom every religion seemed childish, but who tolerated any religion as one of the many follies which made the study of human nature so exceedingly interesting and amusing." But why should the writer be puzzled when he has himself stated that the whole influence of the Church was used to keep them from being returned? The fact is, the aim of the Church is the overthrow of the Republic. The words of Gambetta, "Clericalism there is the enemy," are as true to-day as they were on the day he gave utterance to them. Throughout the Dreyfus

affair the sinister influence of the priests was on the side of the War Office and against the Captain. On this point we can, fortunately, cite the *Spectator* itself, for in the number for October 1, 1898, we read:—

"The clergy and the Catholic laity have been just as violent. They have nothing but insults for all who defend Captain Dreyfus, the Count de Mun has 'called the Government to take repressive measures against a Jew,' and the black robes of the Jesuits 'are seen throughout this vile business behind the bayonets of the War Office.'"

The clergy backed the Army against the Government, they put their money on the wrong horse; and, now they are called upon to pay the penalty, they try to pose as martyrs to religion. No doubt they would have been as ready to back Captain Dreyfus as the Army to gain their end.

The *Spectator*, however, professes to find quite a different reason for the hostility to the Church, and this is the main point we wish to deal with. That reason is that in all Roman Catholic countries "Scepticism tends to become a faith, and a persecuting faith.... The Terrorists, who were sceptics gone slightly lunatic, felt that to be a priest was to be a criminal, and while preaching liberty of conscience sent priests in batches to the guillotine."

This is the sort of thing one expects from a street-corner ranter, or the baser kind of Christian Evidence lecturer, but not from a paper which caters for, presumably, educated people. The writer is probably a cleric, as no educated man with a thorough knowledge of the French Revolution would write such trash now, although Dean Farrar—who represents the culture of the Church of England—preaching in Westminster Abbey in January, 1881, represented the Reign of Terror as a "reign of avowed Atheism." (See citation in "*Life of Bradlaugh*," vol. ii., p. 116, 1895.)

The purpose of this article is to show that the authors of the Reign of Terror were not Atheists—that they were religious men who endeavored to impose their religion upon the French nation, and that the priests who were executed were not executed because they were priests, or for their religion, but for opposition to the ruling government.

Lamartine, the great French historian, himself a fervently religious man, expressly states that—

"The Republic, even in its most terrible excesses, had not entirely broken, as was believed, with God, nor severed all the bonds of man with religion and of the soul with immortality. It had nationalised its forms of worship, but it had neither abolished the exercise nor the images of this nationalised adoration. It had preserved the ancient customs of criminal justice, the habit of sending ministers of religion to the condemned previous to execution. There were constitutional priests. The Bishop of Paris, Gobel, scrupulously inspected this charitable service of the clergy in the prisons" ("*History of the Girondists*," vol. iii., p. 155. Boln's edition).

That some priests were sent to the guillotine is true, but not on account of their religion, as the anonymous writer in the *Spectator* pretends, but as enemies of the Republic. There were priests in the Convention itself, and the very first revolutionary constitution was drawn up by a priest—the Abbé Sieyès. It should also be borne in mind that the Church, like a vulture, was praying upon the very vitals of the country, and the crushing weight it imposed upon the people was one of the immediate causes of the Revolution. Says Bell: "The clergy taxed themselves; two-thirds of all the land in the country was in the possession of these orders, secured upon them by the strictest entails, and while the Commons bore the whole burdens of the State, they were pressed to the earth by other imposts, equally heavy, in the form of tithes to the clergy and feudal services to the nobles" ("*History of the French Revolution*," p. 2). And as it was truly pointed out in the National Assembly, "The clergy, by its formidable hierarchy, and its opulence, will, if its property be spared, be able to maintain itself as a separate republic in the realm." Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, who declared that "the benefices of the clergy



amounted to many thousand millions of francs..... proposed to the clergy to renounce their property in favor of the nation," who in return would guarantee them their salaries (*Ibid*, p. 63). The Bishops' proposal, says Bell,

"was but indifferently received by the clergy. It was carried, however, by a great majority of the Assembly, and the property of the clergy was accordingly declared to be at the disposal of the State. By this measure the importance of the ecclesiastical grandees was destroyed, while the inferior clergy had their allowances increased. The salaries of the latter class of priests, it was enacted, should not be less than twelve hundred francs; and a parsonage-house and a garden, it was declared, should be allotted them besides" (pp. 63, 64).

Very liberal terms at that time, and considering the destitute condition of the country. Even to-day there are hundreds of clergymen in the Church of England who would jump at the offer, if we can believe the lamentations of the religious press. But this was not enough. Regardless of the cries of a starving people, and with the bankruptcy of the country staring them in the face, they would part with nothing voluntarily.

"In the early stages of the Revolution the clergy, from a desire to preserve their vast property, had opposed themselves less strenuously than the *noblesse* to the current of the national will; but from this period they became violent anti-revolutionists.....The clergy began to play their part by disseminating seditious pamphlets in the provinces. In these effusions they stated that the chief aim of the revolutionists was the subversion of the Catholic religion. They began to correspond, too, with the emigrants at Turin. In that city there was a court, of which the Count d'Artois was the head, and Calonne the Prime Minister. In those negotiations it was arranged that the fanaticism of the provinces should be roused, to counteract the movements of the Revolution; and that, should a civil war ensue, foreign courts should be solicited to aid in suppressing what the priests and emigrants termed the march of anarchy and of revolt against legitimate authority" (Bell, pp. 65-66).

Their champion was the Abbé Maury. "His avowed determination was to *perish in the Revolution or to gain a cardinal's hat in quelling it.*"

The Assembly soon found that these were no idle boasts, for we find later on: "These individuals had never ceased to instigate their flocks to resist to the uttermost the present order of things; and such had been the influence of their exhortations that a civil war in the South of France seemed inevitable. Upon these rebels to the Constitution the Assembly resolved to inflict vengeance. They were declared punishable by imprisonment and transportation, and denied the privilege of private worship" (Bell, *Hist. French Rev.*, p. 103).

If the priests had been satisfied with the liberal terms conceded to them by Government, and suggested by a Bishop of their own Church; if they had attended to their own business—the teaching of religion—the Government would have left them in peace. But when, while eating the bread of the Republic, they used their great influence over the minds of their flocks to urge them on to rebellion and the overthrow of the Republic, the only obvious course was to treat them as rebels. Those who speak of persecution in this connection should ask themselves whether our own Government would allow the priests of any religion in this country to preach insurrection and rebellion, and at the same time support them out of the State funds?

But, it is said, "the Christian religion was abolished and Atheism established under the name of the 'worship of Reason,' of which a crowned prostitute was the emblem." WALTER MANN.

(To be continued).

This passage is from the autobiography of Sir Walter Besant: "To this day I can never listen to a sermon. The preachers begin—I try to give them a chance. Then the old habit returns. Involuntarily my eyes drop, I fly away, I am again John-o'-dreams. Perhaps that is the reason why I have not been to church except once or twice for more than thirty years." His father was a minister.

## Correspondence.

### IRRELIGION OF THE POETS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In reading the very interesting and valuable article of "Mimmermus" on the Freethought of the Poets, there is one name it pains me to see missed out—our little Rudyard. I can almost imagine "Mimmermus" chuckling at my greenness in trying to get Mr. Kipling appreciated as a poet. Since that sublime oracle, Mr. Le Gallienne, pronounced upon the subject, it seems fashionable in literary circles to sneer at poor R. K. as a "doggerel-monger"; also, I am afraid R. K. is out of favor with most Freethinkers because he believes that to keep a clean, loaded rifle is the best way to ensure peace—which is anti-Christian, at any rate. However, it is because Rudyard Kipling looms very large in the popular eye that I think he deserves a line in the *Freethinker*; for sometimes in his poetry—jingles, music-hall songs, call them what you will—he pitches into Christianity with a sledge-hammer strength that is positively startling. What Bible believer has read Tomlinson without shuddering?—Tomlinson, who was neither good enough for heaven nor bad enough for hell; so the Lord perforce had to send him back to earth again!

And.....the God that ye took from a printed book be with you, Tomlinson!

Another choice passage is:—

The Devil he blew on a branded soul, and set it aside to cool:—  
"Do ye think I would waste my good pit coal on the hide of a brainsick fool?"

Another choice bit of verse for Bible believers is Kipling's theory of how the Devil got into Noah's Ark, in *The Legend of Evil*. Captain Noah is represented with a strong Irish brogue, driving all the animals on board except the donkey, who is obstinate. Noah gets cross.

Thin Noah spoke him fairly, thin talked to him severely,

An' thin he cursed him squarely to the glory of the Lord:—  
"Divil take the ass that bred you, and the greater ass that fed you;  
Divil go wid you, ye spalpeen!" and the donkey went aboard.

Noah makes a bad voyage, animals die in batches, ladies sicken in the cabin; Noah concludes there must be something wrong, and going downstairs is surprised to find the cause of the trouble Old Nick.

The Devil cursed outrageous, but Noah said umbrageous,

"To what am I indebted for this tenant-right invasion?"

An' the Devil gave for answer, "Evict me if you can, sir,  
For I came in with the donkey on your Honor's invitation!"

It seems from Mr. Kipling's writings that he believes in some sort of a vague, unknowable and undefined deity, but he only seems to refer to that as a sop to emotionalism. How can one write successful books or poetry without referring to gods of some sort? But he is blasphemous enough in his fine "Bolivar" verses.

Just a pack o' rotten plates puttied up wi' tar  
In we came, an' time enough, 'cross Bilbao Bar  
Overloaded, undermanned, meant to founder, we  
Euchred God Almighty's storm, bluffed the eternal sea!

I believe a certain Christian prelate was inane enough to dub Kipling's "Recessional" as the "grandest hymn ever written," but surely—

Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget! Lest we forget!

is (without plagiarism) remarkably similar to Swinburne's:—

Lord God of thy priests, rise up now and show thyself God!

Again, there is a smack at Christianity in a verse from the *Imperial Rescript*:—

They passed one resolution:—Your sub-committee believe  
You can lighten the curse of Adam when you've lightened the  
curse of Eve.

But till we are built like angels, with hammer and chisel and pen,  
We will work for ourself and a woman; for ever and ever,  
amen.

R. K., being Anglo-Indian, has too much sympathy with native religions to be much of a Christian, and in some of his Indian legendary ballads is some of his best work, and genuine poetry. He is fond of quoting native proverbs:—

Your Gods and my Gods—do you or I know which are the stronger?

he says in *Life's Handicap*; and I doubt if such works as *Kim* and the *Jungle Book* could ever have been written by a man who did not have a great affection for the heathens. On the whole, there is reason for Freethinkers to be grateful for the popularity of Rudyard for the spread of such literature as his (like that of Mark Twain) cannot fail to be a severe blow to Christian belief. If I may conclude with a few extracts from the grandly sarcastic *Christmas in India*,



I think "Mimnermus" will find it contains some real poetry, describing the sufferings which Providence inflicts on human kind at Indian Christmas time. The words are spoken by an Englishman, sick for home:—

Oh, the white dust on the highway! Oh, the stenches in the by-way!

Oh, the clammy fog that hovers over earth!

And at home they're making merry, 'neath the white and scarlet berry,

What part have India's exiles in their mirth?

A plague victim is carried by in a religious procession:—

Call on Rama, going slowly, as ye bear a brother lowly—

Call on Rama, he may hear, perhaps, your voice,

With our hymn-books and our psalters we appeal to other altars,

And to-day we bid "good Christian men rejoice!"

The "other altars," apparently, do not choose to answer, for the poem concludes:—

Call a truce, then, to our labors—let us feast with friends and neighbors,

And be merry as the custom of our caste;

For, if faint and forced the laughter, and if sadness follow after,

We are richer by one mocking Christmas past.

I think, after this, that we may fairly consider Mr. Kipling as a poet with a sceptical turn.

G. D.

### A QUESTION OF CHRONOLOGY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—There is no doubt, as your correspondent, Mr. Stevens, points out, some ambiguity in the statements of Josephus respecting the exact year when Herodias left her husband, Herod, to become the wife of Antipas. But I quite fail to see that "it all turns upon the date of the Tetrarch's visit to Rome and his agreement with Herodias," or that "the marriage was practically coincident with that date." Josephus says (*Antiq.*, xviii., v., 1): "About *this time* [*i.e.*, some period subsequent to the death of Philip the Tetrarch, in A.D. 33-34] Aretas, the King of Arabia and Petrea, had a quarrel with Herod Antipas on the following account," etc. Then comes the cause of this quarrel. Antipas, some time before, having met Herodias in Rome, "an agreement was made for her to change her habitation and come to him as soon as he should return from Rome"; also, "one article of this marriage was that he should divorce Aretas's daughter." It is the latter event, not the return from Rome, upon which the date of Herodias becoming the wife of Antipas turns.

Josephus then goes on to say that the daughter of Aretas, after the return of Antipas, having somehow become acquainted with the agreement made with Herodias, "desired him to send her to Macherus," a fortress east of the Dead Sea; and, upon his compliance, "she soon came to her father, and told him of Herod's intentions." The narrative then proceeds: "So they raised armies on both sides, and prepared for war.....and, when they had joined battle, all Herod's army was destroyed," etc. This battle was fought in A.D. 35 or 36; the circumstances which led to it took place "about this time"—*viz.*, A.D. 34 or 35.

In the next paragraph the Jewish historian incidentally refers to an event which had taken place some time before. He says: "Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God.....as a punishment of what he did against John that was called the Baptist," etc. Here it is evident that the war between Antipas and Aretas followed immediately after the latter had learnt Antipas's design against his lawful wife; it is also evident that the Baptist was not alive at that time, for Herod's defeat was regarded as a punishment for causing his death.

Mr. Stevens, however, seems inclined to think that "where there is so much ambiguity it is just possible that John the Baptist did reproach Herod with his infidelity to the daughter of Aretas somewhere about A.D. 30, and that he was put to death in consequence." And this conclusion is the more surprising when the writer admits at the same time that "four or five years appears a long time to be allowed to elapse by Aretas before attempting to wreak vengeance upon Antipas for the wrong done his daughter." Such an interval certainly does appear a long time for a king with an army at his command to wait before attempting to avenge a great insult and dishonor. Such a long delay, however, is entirely excluded by the narrative. Herodias became the wife of Antipas either just before or shortly after the battle with Aretas—that is, in A.D. 34-36. It also goes without saying that John the Baptist could not reprove Antipas until after the marriage had taken place.

Let us now turn to the Gospel account. According to Luke (iii. 1) the Baptist commenced his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius (*i.e.*, A.D. 28), and shortly afterwards was cast into prison. It was, in fact, not until after the arrest of John that Jesus commenced his own ministry, which ended in the crucifixion (A.D. 30). According to the

Gospel account, then, John reproved Antipas for marrying Herodias in the year 28 or 29, and was put to death in the latter year. Accepting the date given by Luke for the first public appearance of the Baptist, that teacher had been dead six or seven years when Herodias came to live with Antipas.

With regard to the statements of Josephus respecting Herodias and Salome (*Antiq.* xviii. v. 4) it need only be pointed out that this paragraph is simply genealogical, enumerating all the members of the family of Herod the Great for several generations, without regard to chronology. Herodias was married twice; she became the wife of Antipas after the birth of Salome, not before that event. This is merely the historian's way of saying that Salome was the daughter of Herodias by her first husband, Herod, not by the second. How otherwise were his readers to know?

As regards the death of the Baptist, Mr. Stevens says that the account in Josephus "seems to require the postulate of some such cause for Herod's antipathy and 'jealous temper' as would be supplied by John's reproof of him for his flagrant violation of the religion and laws of his country." In this, however, Mr. Stevens is mistaken. If he will study the history of the Jews prior to the war with the Romans, he will find that whenever a teacher or prophet appeared in Judea, and drew to himself a number of followers, the new sect or party was invariably suppressed by the ruling Procurator, and the leader put to death. Thus, a religious fanatic named Theudas, who "persuaded a great part of the people to follow him to the River Jordan," and who "told them he was a prophet," was put to death by Fadus, with many of his followers. Other examples are: the sons of Judas of Galilee, who were crucified by the Procurator Alexander; an Egyptian false prophet, whose followers were dispersed or slain by Felix; another religious impostor, who was slain with many of his dupes by order of Festus, etc. This was merely a precautionary measure, for, as Josephus says, these self-constituted prophets "deceived and deluded the people under pretence of Divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of government." This, there can be no doubt, was the view taken by the Roman governors. What, now, is the reason assigned for the death of the Baptist? Josephus says that Antipas "feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it in his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise."

Mr. Stevens is also inclined to think that the paragraph concerning the Baptist may be a Christian interpolation. Well, were such the case, the writer could scarcely have failed to insert something about Christ or his miracles or teaching, or of John being the forerunner, or of his reproving Antipas on account of Herodias. But, as we know, there is not a single word which can in any way connect the Baptist with Christ; while, on the other hand, the cause assigned for the baptiser's death flatly contradicts that given in the Gospels.

ABRACADABRA.

### Faith.

THE soul of man betrays in anxious dread  
It's fear of that behind life's veil;  
And while vague eyes on future fortune bend,  
Life slips away.

In fetters bound behold the mind of man  
Shackled and helpless as the dust;  
No effort makes to rise above the ban  
Of times unjust.

Few have the courage wherewith to dispel  
The seeds of error sown by faith:  
For onward in an all-unconscious way  
They go content.

The air from which we draw our breath  
Is peopled thick with fancied gods;  
Striving the questioning heart to seek  
Their usefulness.

Why with tenacity to the gods adhere  
When earth requires so much attention?  
The truest ones who love the light  
Abjure convention.

And so thro' all times it has been  
This clinging to a sickly fear.  
Arise! and cast it to the winds  
Now and for ever.

ANONYMOUS.

John R. Thompson and Irene his wife were active workers in the Greenpoint Methodist church, Brooklyn. Mrs. Thompson was especially devout, so when she ran away with another man she sent back to Greenpoint for her Bible, saying she could not get along without it.



**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.): Closed during August.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Mr. White.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, Mr. C. Cohen; 6, Mr. C. Cohen. Davies.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch N. S. S.): 11.30, Mr. F. A. Davies.

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (West London Branch N. S. S.): 7.30, Mr. R. P. Edwards.

HYDE PARK, near Marble Arch (West London Branch N. S. S.). Freethought literature on sale at all meetings. 11.30, Debate between J. Bruce Wallace, M.A., and R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, Mr. C. Cohen.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7 p.m., A Lecture.

STATION ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey.

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15 and 6.15, A Lecture.

**COUNTRY.**

BRADFORD (Vacant Ground, Morley-road): Mr. Ward will lecture on Monday and Thursday at 7.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): No lectures during August.

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