

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

*The sophist sneers : Fool, take
Thy pleasure, right or wrong.*

The pious wail : Forsake

A world these sophists throng.

Be neither saint nor sophist-led, but be a man !

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Dr. Clifford, Hume, and the Puritans.

THE *Daily News* has been signalling the "silly season" by two correspondences. One of these dealt with a question that palpitates with actuality—"Is True Love Played Out?" The other dealt with the question, "Can Poor Men Save?" Persons with incomes of two and three hundred a year took part in this interesting discussion. It may be doubted, however, if all the epistles referred to will have any appreciable effect on love or thrift.

Concurrently with these two correspondences, a series of letters was published in the *Daily News* from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Clifford. This stalwart champion of Nonconformity, of which the aforesaid journal is the political organ, has worked himself into a great state of excitement over the Education Bill. He puts the Chapel case in a way that is bound to please Dissenters. But the Church side is supported by the Government, and seems likely to win "hands down." According to Dr. Clifford, the struggle is not one between Church and Chapel; it is a struggle between despotism and liberty. Church teaching in public schools, with a conscience clause for Nonconformists, is an odious tyranny; but Nonconformist teaching in public schools, with a conscience clause for Freethinkers, is a beautiful toleration. This is how Dr. Clifford looks at the matter, and it is no doubt very natural. Yet he should not play the ostrich policy in a great daily newspaper, which must have some readers who are not so easily deceived. Dr. Clifford obstinately ignores the rights and claims of non-Christians in this controversy; and in so doing he shows that the present contest is simply one between Church and Chapel after all.

In the last of his letters on the Education Bill, Dr. Clifford burst into a perfect ecstasy of Free Church fervor. Free Churchmen are of the people, with the people, and for the people. "The ideas they hold," it appears, "and the principles on which their Societies are built, are intrinsically popular, democratic, universal, inclusive not exclusive, free not monopolist, opposed to every form of caste and priestism, broad as the love of the Eternal Father and limitless as the brotherhood of man." This rather hectic declaration, which is better calculated for the pulpit than the press, was backed up by the statement that it had the witness of those who were not Free Churchmen. "Hume," added Dr. Clifford, "is both a Tory and an Agnostic, as well as a historian, and yet he says, 'It is to the Puritans the English owe their liberties.'"

No. 1,104.

On reading this I ventured to address the following letter to the *Daily News* :—

DR. CLIFFORD AND DAVID HUME.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE DAILY NEWS."

SIR,—Dr. Clifford says that Hume was both a Tory and an Agnostic. But the specific connotation of the word "Tory" has altered a great deal in a hundred and fifty years, and the word "Agnostic" was not invented in the days of "Saint David." It is certain, however, that Hume was not a Christian, and that he disbelieved the doctrine of a future life. He was too cautious in that age of persecution to state the precise views he held on the question of the existence of God; but they are easily gathered by any person of moderate intelligence who takes the trouble to read the *Natural History* and the *Dialogues*, and has the wit to read between the lines of irony and sarcasm. The *History of England* is a more voluminous production. I am one of the few persons (I believe) who have perused it to the end, but I have not opened its pages for some time, and I do not possess an infallible memory. This is my excuse for asking Dr. Clifford to tell me where Hume says, "It is to the Puritans the English owe their liberties." These words are placed by Dr. Clifford between inverted commas, and therefore are (or should be) an accurate quotation.—Yours, etc.,

G. W. FOOTE.

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

Dr. Clifford was apparently too busy to reply; or perhaps he imitates Mr. Chamberlain, who imitates Jehovah, with his "What I have said I have said." Two other correspondents, however, rushed into the breach. The first was Mr. J. Watkinson, hailing from Herne Bay, who sneered that "Mr. Foote may attach supreme importance to inverted commas." The second was a Presbyterian minister, who has often asserted that all the leaders of Secularism stand in trembling awe of him. By way of corroborating his assertion I reproduce his letter in full :—

SIR,—In his informing letter in the *Daily News* for September 10 upon the Education Bill and "What is at Stake," Dr. Clifford states: "Hume is both a Tory and an Agnostic, as well as a historian, and yet he says: 'It is to the Puritans the English owe their liberties.'" The whole of this statement is questioned by Mr. G. W. Foote in your issue of September 11. Hume did not [thus in *Daily News*, but presumably "Dr. Clifford"] is, nevertheless, quite correct. Hume did write as an avowed partisan of Charles I., and his deep Tory bias colors his account of the Civil War, the Republic, and Cromwell's Protectorate. In his *Own Life*, Hume openly declares: "In above a hundred alterations," "in the reigns of the two first Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side." In regard to the Agnosticism of Hume, it was not Atheistic, but included, like that of Professor Huxley, Theism.

Mr. Foote erroneously says that "Hume was too cautious in that age of persecution to state the precise views he held as to the existence of God." Hume's views were both clear and precise upon this important matter. He says: "The whole framework of nature bespeaks an Intelligent Author; and no rational inquirer, after serious reflection, can suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion." "All the sciences lead us almost insensibly to acknowledge a first intelligent author." Mr. Foote asserts that Hume "disbelieved the doctrine of a future life." His writings nowhere say so. He contended against certain physical and metaphysical arguments which were in vogue at that time.

In questioning Dr. Clifford's further statement that Hume says "It is to the Puritans the English owe their liberties," it is pleasant to note that Mr. Foote admits he has "not an infallible memory." Writing of the prerogatives and usurpations assumed by Charles without law, Hume says: "Hence

the heroism of Hampden, who sustained the whole violence of Royal prosecution rather than pay a tax of twenty shillings, not imposed by Parliament; hence the care of all English patriots to guard against the first encroachments of the Crown; and hence alone the existence, at this day, of English liberty." And again: "So absolute, indeed, was the authority of the Crown, that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved, by the Puritans alone, and it was to this sect.....that the English owe the whole freedom of the Constitution."—Yours, etc.,

Z. B. WOFFENDALE.

White House, Dartmouth Park-avenue, N.W.

This called for another letter from my pen, and I forwarded one; but, knowing the ways of editors, especially when Freethinkers are concerned, I enclosed a stamp for the return of my letter if it were not inserted. What happened will be seen presently. Meanwhile here is what I wrote:—

DR. CLIFFORD AND DAVID HUME.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY NEWS."

SIR,—I ventured to ask Dr. Clifford where David Hume had said that "It is to the Puritans the English owe their liberties." Two gentlemen rush in to speak for him, as though he were struck with a sudden incapacity and needed their generous assistance. Both of them resent my asking for information. They are apparently unused to such a spectacle. But they need not have gone to the length of charging me with questioning Dr. Clifford's accuracy. All I did was civilly to request a reference. Mr. Woffendale, in spite of his quotations, has not given it. He must excuse me from confounding "freedom of the Constitution," as the result of a long political contest between the Crown and Parliament over the question of the royal prerogative, with "the liberties" of the English people, which is an expression that covers the whole life of the nation. I am quite prepared to spend a little time in extracting Hume's opinion of the Puritans in relation to civil liberty in general and religious liberty in particular. But in the meantime I should like to have that reference. I have found that a single sentence, and especially a short one, usually requires to be read with an eye to the context. There was once a man (they say) who made the Psalmist declare "There is no God." Perhaps I should add that Mr. Watkinson must not expect me to show a high regard for his code of literary ethics. He sneers at me as fastidious for supposing inverted commas to mark an accurate quotation. At this rate Dr. Clifford may well pray to be saved from his friends.

Mr. Woffendale proceeds on the assumption that I questioned Hume's being a Tory. I did nothing of the sort. All I said was that the connotation of the word "Tory" had changed in a hundred and fifty years. There were men who understood freedom in the Tory party in the eighteenth century. It is enough to mention the great names of Swift, Pope, and Bolingbroke.

Dr. Clifford called Hume an Agnostic—a term invented by Professor Huxley within my own lifetime. Mr. Woffendale appears to accept the description, and then shows his knowledge of Agnosticism by quoting a sentence to prove Hume a Theist. He does not locate that sentence. It occurs on the first page of *The Natural History of Religion*. Mr. Woffendale should read the last paragraph of the last page of that work. Perhaps he will realize that Hume was a master of sly sarcasm and subtle irony, and must not always be taken as if he were signing an affidavit. That great writer is, indeed, full of pitfalls for the unwary. Reading him in extracts is not the way to get at his meaning. Professor Huxley showed, from the Agnostic side, what the vague "Theism" of Hume really came to in the light of his own analysis. Joseph De Maistre, the great Catholic champion, who had read Hume, and really understood him, said that the whole eighteenth century had not produced one to be compared with him as an enemy of religion. I quote from the "Lettres sur l'Inquisition." "His cold venom," De Maistre says, "is far more dangerous than the foaming rage of Voltaire. If ever, among men who have heard the Gospel preached, there has existed a veritable Atheist (which I will not undertake to decide), it is he." One may smile at the abuse and admit the penetration.

A word in conclusion as to Hume's disbelief of the doctrine of a future life. I had in mind the Essay on Immortality, published with the Essay on Suicide, in a little volume after Hume's death. It is not included in the common editions of the "Essays," but may be found in Green's. Hume took all the arguments he had heard of (and there are no new ones) and tore them to shreds. His conclusion was that, if there be a soul, it is as mortal as the body. And if this is not disbelieving the doctrine of a future life, what is? Possibly my critic has confused *disbelieve* and *deny*. These are not identical. In my humble way, I disbelieve the doctrine of a

future life, but I do not deny it. Belief and disbelief are opinions resting on probabilities. Denial is (or should be) based on knowledge and certitude.—Yours, etc.,

G. W. FOOTE.

My letter was *not* inserted. It was returned with the following note:—

The *Daily News* Office, Sept. 14.

DEAR SIR,

I hardly think that the subject on which you write is worth pursuing any further, and accordingly return your letter as requested.—Yours faithfully,

A. G. GARDINER

(Editor).

G. W. Foote, Esq.

I must compliment the editor of the *Daily News* on his ingenuity. Dr. Clifford should be very much obliged to him. But just imagine the depth of intellectual degradation which the press has sunk to in this country! Huxley called Hume the greatest thinker of the eighteenth century, even though it produced Kant. Yet the opinions of Hume are a subject not "worth pursuing" in comparison with even the subjects of the "silly season"! Still, if the opinions of Hume *are* a subject not worth pursuing, it might have been a point of honor at least not to misrepresent them.

Hume's real opinion of the Puritans, since the point has been raised, shall be dealt with in the *Freethinker*. This is commonly supposed to be a frivolous sort of paper, but its readers have an interest in intellectual questions, and it finds room for truth whether profitable or not. I will take the trouble to go through Hume's great *History*—for it is a great book in more than its bulk—and bring out what he actually says about the Puritans from every point of view. This is not a case in which the whole truth can be found in a sentence or a paragraph. It will be necessary to lay many chapters under contribution. This task will require more room than I have now at my disposal. It shall therefore have an article to itself next week.

In the meanwhile, however, I will add something to my correction of Mr. Woffendale's reading of Hume's views on religion. The passage he quotes about an "Intelligent Author" of nature is of the nature of a bow before a fencing match. It is immediately followed by a "But," which is the beginning of one of the most ruthless, scientific, and effective attacks on religion ever penned. At the end of the treatise Hume gives the freest rein to his sceptical temper. Here we have the "cold venom" of De Maistre. And what is the conclusion?

The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment, appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject. But such is the frailty of human reason, and such the irresistible contagion of opinion, that even this deliberate doubt could scarcely be upheld; did we not enlarge our view, and, opposing our species of superstition to another, set them a quarrelling; while we ourselves, during their fury and contention, happily make our escape into the calm, though obscure, religions of philosophy.

It appears to me that Mr. Woffendale has not read Hume, but only some selection of extracts from his writings: or else that he has simply read him with an eye for some casual sentence that might serve the turn in imposing on illiterate Christians. Precisely on account of his sarcasm and irony Hume is one of the very last writers who can be faithfully represented by a picked sentence. He must be read entirely, and must also be read between the lines. In brief, he should be read with brains and candor; two qualities which are not generally conspicuous in Christian apologists. Hume was notoriously a non-Christian, yet he speaks in the famous Essay on Miracles of "our Savior" and "our religion," and even "our most holy religion." These expressions might as well be cited to prove he was a Christian as the passage about the "Intelligent Author" of nature to prove he was a Theist.

G. W. FOOTE.

"Mark Twain."

"Laughter holding both his sides."—MILTON, *L'Allegro*.
 "For he's a jolly good fellow."—*Old Song*.

THE function of the humorist is underestimated. The man who makes you laugh does you a great service. The physiological value of merriment has not been appraised yet at its proper value. Although doctors bestow a certain patronage on cheerfulness, and give it a minor place in the pharmacopœia, no one will dispute that humorists are public benefactors.

And yet, with the exception of Rabelais, Cervantes, Moliere, and Dickens, who is liked better for his pathos than his fun, humorous writers are held to be only second-rate literary artists. The world will not take them seriously. Perhaps it is their own fault for electing to provide fun for thankless folk. Mark Twain is unquestionably a great humorist. He has kept us all laughing for thirty years. His career has been a somewhat eccentric one.

Born at Florida, Missouri, in 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens was apprenticed as a boy to a printer, and worked at the case until his twentieth year, when we find him as "man at the wheel" on board a Mississippi steamboat. He seems to have taken to journalism at this time. The strangely varied life that he met on the boats stimulated his literary vein, and he began writing stories and sketches, signing his work "Mark Twain." This singular name was derived from his occupation. "Mark Twain" was the phrase employed by the men who took soundings on the boat, and meant "mark two fathoms." In 1861 our humorist went to Nevada, where he prospected for gold by day and scribbled articles by night. Ultimately he became editor of *The Virginia City Enterprise*, but got into difficulties and resigned.

He now bent his steps towards San Francisco, and there fell across another humorist, Bret Harte. Twain and Harte joined forces in running a paper, but their partnership was not one of long duration. This short association resulted in the two writers becoming, so to speak, literary twins. When two authors come to be habitually coupled together in men's thoughts, like Addison and Steele, Goethe and Schiller, Byron and Shelley, Dickens and Thackeray, Tennyson and Browning, Björnson and Ibsen, it is generally a misfortune to one or other of them—sometimes to both. A factitious rivalry is forced upon them. People take sides, and insist on making futile comparisons. If one falls behind in reputation he is held to have been beaten in a wholly imaginary race. But time will level this fictitious rivalry. Undoubtedly the author of *The Luck of Roaring Camp* will, no less than the creator of *Tom Sawyer*, be strong enough to carry his appeal before the High Court of Posterity.

Twain soon after threw the pen aside, and set off on another gold-seeking expedition. His mining venture, however, proved unsuccessful, and Mark returned to San Francisco. He appears to have been in poverty at this time, and, in despair, took to lecturing. Americans have an extraordinary fondness for lectures. It is their favorite form of intellectual dissipation, and they are ready to pay handsomely for it—as some of our English public men know. "Mark Twain's" lectures chiefly turned on his adventures in Nevada and on the Mississippi, and were full of a rare humor. In American phrase, Mark's lectures "caught on," and the prodigal was amply repaid for his wanderings in the wilderness.

In 1869 his book, *The Innocents Abroad; or, the New Pilgrim's Progress*, came out; and one fine morning Twain awoke to find himself famous. The book was a masterpiece of humor. It was ostensibly a humorous guide, to the show places of Europe; but it has permanently added to the gaiety of nations. In 1873 Twain published another droll book, *Roughing It*, and since then he has written *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *A Tramp Abroad*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and several other books. Mark Twain does not believe in over-production.

As a humorist Twain stands a little lower than Dickens. Twain's humor is distinctly national. America has to-day a school of humor as essentially national as German music, or French art. American air, we are told, is famous for its extreme dryness, and dryness is the salient feature of American humor. There is nothing of the brilliance of the French humorists. But in the hands of a master it is dangerously near perfection. Your American humorist is a showman, absolutely unimpassioned about his exhibits, as a showman should be.

Twain never moves a muscle. He says the funniest things in a calm, almost aggrieved manner. That distractingly funny essay on the Swiss chaamois in *A Tramp Abroad* is a perfect example of serious, unemotional joking. But this dry quality of humor tends to be unsympathetic. There is a cynical strain in it, a tendency to laugh at human nature. But American humor is invading the Old World. Even our English humorists are forming themselves on the American Master. The author of *Three Men in a Boat* wrote in a manner suggesting that he had given his days and nights to "Twain." Doubtless the imitation was involuntary.

"Mark Twain" is, in his own inimitable way, a philosopher. His Freethought permeates his writings. The "unco guid" have their grievous plaint against "Mark" that he commits the unpardonable sin of cracking jokes about sacred matters. Biblical yarns fare as badly in his delightful pages as the Popular Superstition in the portly volumes of Herbert Spencer. But those who profess and call themselves Christian are ever intolerant. They are always ready to—

Rush on a benighted man
 And give him two black eyes for being blind.

Mark Twain is an omnivorous reader but confesses that Macaulay is his literary god. One can trace the great historian's influence in many a page of "Macaulay flower" eloquence. Whether the austere Macaulay would have understood Twain, or, understanding, would have appreciated him, is another question.

Twain is not riotously humorous in conversation. Men seldom talk as they write. If they did, how incompatible things would be for us lesser mortals. Imagine Shakespeare talking to his Stratford friends in his "Hamlet" vein; or, to come down to modern times, conceive a dinner party at which George Meredith should fling about his incomparable epigrams. Twain is not a funny man in private. He who has made the world laugh so much reserves for himself a mild, contemplative melancholy, and allows his friends to crack jokes on which he calmly sits in judgment.

To-day, the creator of *Huckleberry Finn* is incontestably the most eminent man of letters in America, and the living lustre of his fame tends to deepen with the progress of the years.

MIMNERMUS.

The Religious Instinct.

THE so-called "religious instinct" comes in for a good share of attention from religious writers—very much more than it deserves, and much more than it would get if only it was properly understood. But "instinct" is such a blessed word, it may mean so much, or so little, or even nothing at all, that it is not surprising to find it used so largely, and when it is wedded to that extremely elastic word "religious," then it becomes a mighty weapon to brandish about in church, chapel, or religious gathering. Now, one does not expect either illuminating philosophy or sound science from the average preacher, and when he belongs to the dissenting variety, the expectation that we shall not get either is transformed into a certainty. A preacher's training and career does not make for either clear thinking or exact speaking. A young man whose ambition is to blossom forth as a servant of the Lord is not taught *how* to think, but what to think. A knowledge of exact science,

historical or physical, is not a necessary portion of his mental outfit, and is apt to be in the way if it gets entangled with it. The study of old-fashioned text-books of divinity, of somebody's "Institutes" that were behind the times at the date of publication, and are now protected from criticism by the difficulty of our realising that people ever did seriously believe such things, the constant repetition of phrases without meaning, and the paralysing experience of class meetings, experience meetings and the like, are all combined enough to demoralise whatever intellectual strength one may originally be endowed with.

There is no internal evidence that Mr. Frederick Pickett, the report of whose sermon in a Wandsworth chapel on the religious instinct now lies before me, was ever endowed with any startling degree of intellectual ability, and it is certain, if he did possess it, it has evaporated in some way or other. Mr. Pickett is much cheered by the discovery that all people at all times and in all places have had some sort of a religion, and calmly assuming that what has been, must always continue to be, concludes that people always will have a religion of some sort. This is a common contention with religious writers, and is only worth noting now for that reason. Not to do Mr. Pickett an unintentional injustice, it is as well to give his own words as reported:—

"It is no part of the business of the Christian preacher to seek to create the religious feeling in man. The religious instinct is innate, born with man. It amounts almost to a scientific axiom that wherever you find man you find a form of religion. Religion is not an acquired quality. It is not something which comes by development. It is an essential element of human nature, which no civilisation can outgrow, no science advance beyond, no scepticism possibly destroy. The only Atheism which human nature admits is practical rather than rational. It is moral rather than intellectual folly which leads the heart to say there is no God.....We know it is a common explanation of the Secularistic school to say that this instinct for religion is simply the offspring of ignorance, or a fruit of the imagination, begotten, in some cases, of fear; in others inspired by hope. But how singular that ignorance should be so universal? For go where you will, you find an instinctive and indestructible sense, that there is a greater world than matter, and a Higher Power than man."

A passage of this description is worth preserving, if only for its hopeless confusion, but at present it deserves study because it embodies so much of the cant of current apologetics. Instinct is, as I have said, a very elastic word. We use it of actions that were once deliberative, but by frequent performance have resulted in a permanently modified nerve structure, and we also apply it to actions that are the unconscious reaction of an organism under particular stimuli, and which have never been deliberative at all. But in neither case is there any instinct known to science that can be said to come without development. Every instinct has its history whether it belongs to the one class or the other, they are all acquired, either consciously or unconsciously, and to get such an expression as the one used above, only serves to show how utterly destitute of the mere rudiments of scientific thinking are these religious teachers of the people.

Now, the "religious instinct" forms no exception to the general rule. Any Freethinker may agree that, wherever you find man, you find him religious. Nay, more; a Freethinker who knows his case may well insist strongly upon this point, and find in it a demonstration of the case against supernaturalism. If religious beliefs were only found among *some* people—particularly if these happened to be the more civilised of the world's inhabitants—the disproof of supernaturalism would be far more difficult than it is. But this, of course, is not the case. There does not exist a race of people without some form of religion; and, be it specially noted, the smaller the degree of civilisation, the more tenaciously do they cling to their religion. The higher races display the least religion, the more advanced among

the higher races the least religion of all. This phenomenon alone should be enough to point the inevitable moral that religion is an "instinct" which the race is fast outgrowing. True, it is still active and still powerful; but the fact of it weakening at all is ample disproof of all the balderdash that one reads of its being "innate," "born with man," etc.

Now, the origin of this "religious instinct" is no more difficult of explanation than other human and animal instincts, and, as a matter of fact, not so difficult as a great many. The real explanation of the existence and universality of religious beliefs lies with the facts—first, that human nature is everywhere fundamentally identical; and, secondly, that the reasoning of man, savage or civilised, is always governed by the same laws. It matters little whether we derive religious beliefs from the worship of the primitive ghost or from the deification of natural forces, or from both combined; the manner in which religious beliefs have originated is the same. It is a simple psychological law that man everywhere interprets the unknown in terms of the known. With our present knowledge of physical and psychological forces we are able to explain much that occurs in a way that puts it outside of religion altogether. But early man knew nothing of the forces with which we are acquainted, with the result that his explanations, so far as they existed, were in terms of his own volition and intelligence. Where the scientist sees physical forces at work, the savage sees volition or mind. There is, as someone has pointed out, an error of classification. Things are classified as living that are not living, spiritual agencies are invoked where none really exist, and only as knowledge becomes more exact is a more accurate classification decided upon. If, for example, I were to pick up a curiously-shaped stone, and describe it as a fossilised lizard, my mode of reasoning would not be in the least different to another who described the object as what it really was. I should have been misled by certain fancied resemblances, and so classified the object wrongly. And it is this principle that underlies the natural origin of religious belief, while its universality is due to the fact that, the human mind being everywhere fundamentally identical, the same conclusions have been arrived at under substantially similar conditions.

There is, therefore, every reason for the Freethinker recognising and insisting upon the universality of some form of religious belief. It is what we should expect to find if evolution be a fact; it would upset all our calculations if we did not find it. But still, it is not at all accurate to talk of religion as being *innate*. What is innate is the tendency of the uninformed mind to read itself into nature; and this is seen as strongly in a child giving life to its playthings as in a savage seeing life in the motion of sun or planet. It is this fetishistic tendency that is seized upon by religious organisations all over the world, and developed to their own advantage. Mr. Pickett says that it is no part of their business to create the religious feeling in man. But it seems to be a large part of their business to see that it does not die away. Considering that religion is "born with man," that neither civilisation nor science nor scepticism can destroy it, there is an altogether astonishing amount of pains taken to cultivate and protect it. It has to be carefully pumped into children before they are old enough to understand it; it requires a large army of men to be constantly engaged in expounding it and defending it; it needs protecting by legislation and social prestige from attack; and yet it is an innate instinct that cannot be destroyed! Is there any other instinct that needs protecting in this manner?

It is, perhaps, too much to expect anyone of Mr. Pickett's calibre to realise that in all probability the "religious instinct" might by this time either have disappeared or reduced to such a point as not to demand serious attention, had it not been artificially cultivated. But scientific students of human evolution will recognise that both consciously and unconsciously the religious type of mind has always

been carefully cultivated, and its opposite more or less rigorously suppressed. We have barely emerged from the days when to be known as non-religious or anti-religious meant extinction, and even now social conditions operate to place a premium upon religion and a heavy tax upon Freethought. Let any one seriously realise the meaning of the fact that for thousands of generations, with very rare exceptions, rulers, political and religious, have combined to crush independent criticism and free speech, and how carefully credulity has been fostered, and they may well wonder if the "religious instinct" would now be active had not this species of selection taken place. The truth is that a religious type of human nature has been bred, much as the various varieties of animals have been elaborated; and that there should be found, after this long and insistent process, *anyone* who rejects religious belief, speaks volumes to those who read history with any perception of its real significance.

But even Mr. Pickett does not find the matter so simple as might be supposed. There are difficulties connected with his view of man, and of a religious instinct that has no apparent cause for its existence. This instinct does not always behave as it ought, which is another peculiarity unconnected with any instinct of which we have cognisance. Man's innate religious feeling, he finds, does not always lead him to Christianity, it does not even keep him to one God; it is an instinct that seems to flounder about anyhow and anywhere, and to need constant guidance. And he asks plaintively, "How comes it to pass that it does not find its right object and its proper exercise?..... Why is it inert and well nigh extinct in so many, especially as civilisation advances?..... Why does the religious feeling so often miscarry?" Of course, the reply to these queries is that given above. The objects of religious beliefs vary because they are the production of human speculation in the absence of adequate information, and their form is necessarily determined by their particular environment. And the religious feeling dies out in many, "especially as civilisation advances," for the reason that it has no legitimate place in a scientific conception of man and nature.

But this is not the explanation offered by Mr. Pickett. "We only get a full answer when we bring in the great dark factor of sin." It is sheer cussedness that does it. Man is not an Atheist from a rational cause, but from a moral one, as he has previously reminded us. "And we are confronted with the painful fact that though man was made for God, yet he does not seek God." Another one of God's calculations gone wrong. Well, Mr. Pickett almost commands respect. There are not very many people who would say nowadays, first in the pulpit, and then in cold print, that it is moral obliquity that is the sole cause of Atheism, and one feels the same kind of respect for him that one has for a very ancient fossil. The Methodist Church should be proud of such a philosophic exponent of the religious instinct as Mr. Pickett. Yet he thinks it "singular that ignorance should be so universal." I do not find it singular, only painful and awkward; the only singular thing I observe is that Mr. Pickett should be without any sense of how strong a proof he is of its universality.

Having reached this conclusion, we are prepared for Mr. Pickett's other reflection that man "Without external restraints and remedial agencies always tends to the gutter," only, again, one wonders, if this is true, what is the value of this innate religious feeling which defies eradication and is yet "inert and well nigh extinct in so many"? A religious instinct which cannot keep man out of the gutter without external restraints and non-religious remedial agencies, is hardly worth the trouble of cultivating. Of course, no healthy-minded person believes that ordinary human nature needs this constant police supervision in order to behave decently; and the opinion is only worth noting in order to illustrate what a miserable view of human nature the Christian habitually takes. He will talk much about the de-

gradation of linking man with the lower animals, or of identifying thought with physical processes, and yet in the same breath we find them propounding views of human nature which makes man little better than a confirmed criminal, only to be kept within limits by the fear of hell or the hope of reward in heaven.

We might commend the following from Spencer's *Data of Ethics* to Mr. Pickett's attention:—

"The truly moral deterrent from murder is not constituted by a representation of hanging as a consequence, or by a representation of tortures in hell as a consequence, or by a representation of horror and hatred exerted in fellow men, but by a representation of the necessary natural results—the infliction of death agony on the victims, the destruction of all his possibilities of happiness, the destruction of all his belongings. Neither the thought of imprisonment, nor of divine anger, nor of social justice, is that which constitutes the moral check on theft; but the thought of injury to the person robbed, joined with a vague consciousness of the general evils caused by disregard of proprietary rights..... Conversely, the man who is moved by a moral feeling to help another in difficulty does not picture to himself any reward here or hereafter, but pictures only the better condition he is trying to bring about. One who is morally prompted to fight against a social evil, has neither material benefit or social applause before his mind, but only the mischiefs he seeks to remove and the increased well-being which will follow their removal."

Although it is doubtful if our philosophic exponent of "religious instinct" would appreciate its value.

C. COHEN.

"How It Strikes a Contemporary."

—ROBERT BROWNING.

THE *Freethinker* for July 27 gets after Americans in this wise:—"We often meet in American papers, and even in American Freethought papers, with gratuitous and sometimes very odd references to the politics of Great Britain. Now we venture to suggest, at least to our Freethought contemporaries on the great American continent, that it is just possible that some things want a little consideration in their own country. Take the following news paragraph, for instance: 'A negro has been burnt at the stake at Clayton, in Mississippi, for attempting to assault a young white lady.' Now we do not ignore the fact that a negro problem on paper is a different thing from a negro problem at your doors; but, at the same time, we think that we may hazard the observation that roasting human beings alive is generally considered a mark of barbarism. Lynch law in the United States, looks at this distance, very much like a pretence of justice under which the whites gratify their race hatred against the blacks. We believe it is always blacks who are lynched, and always whites who do the lynching. And the thing is so horrible, and so common, that the American humanitarians would do well to give it their attention—even if they had to give less attention to some other evils in very distant parts of the world."

The August 2 edition of the *Investigator* was out before the *Freethinker* reached us. In "What We See" we took occasion to say:—

"That a mob in Blackwell, Okla., drove out a negro family and burned their home—

"That private advices, to the effect that no negroes are allowed in the Territory, have come to our notice—

"That such a barbarous method of settling the negro problem reflects great discredit on the white savages of Oklahoma."

Perhaps this is not explicit enough to suit the writer of "Acid Drops" in the *Freethinker*. But if he had read the *Investigator* carefully for the last few years he would know that we have constantly, and at every opportunity, condemned the alarming indifference to law and order shown by the ignorant Christian community in the South. We hear from it very often to our disadvantage, for the Southern people are the touchiest and proudest lot that ever stepped, and they order their paper stopped immediately if we say anything at all offensive to their great conceit. It is not popular to condemn lynching, but every decent paper, North or South, is noted for its firm stand against this degrading practice. The Southern people generally are quite as eager as the Northern to stop this savage taking of the law into their own hands by the mob, and the whole country is alive to the danger brewing for popular government if this tendency to lawlessness is not eradicated speedily.

—The Boston Investigator.

Crackton-on-Sea—Sunday Morning.

'Tis lively, very lively by the sea, sea, sea,
On the day that's dedicated to a ghost;
Upon the beach I lay me down and D, D, D
All the raving, ranting rogues that "rule the roast."

'Tis scrubby, very scrubby is the chin, chin, chin
Of your "humble," for he hasn't had a shave;
To shave him on a Sunday is a sin, sin, sin
That would damn a barber's soul beyond the grave.

They're ugly, very ugly are the coal, coal, coal—
Scuttle bonnets and the guernseys colored red,
Of the "Army" that is fairly up a pole, pole, pole,
And that makes a row enough to raise the dead.

'Tis lively, very lively is the tune, tune, tune
Of the Hallelujah Concertina Band;
But I wish it could be carried very soon, soon, soon
To its Master in the bright and happy Land.

The Savior, blessed Savior died for me, me, me,
So I'm told by one whose nose is red with beer;
But off I send the fellow with a flea, flea, flea
(Metaphorically speaking) in his ear.

'Tis pow'rful, very pow'rful is his jaw, jaw, jaw,
It would shame old Balaam's ass and all its race;
If he spoke beneath a roof he'd make a flaw, flaw, flaw,
And he'd shatter every window in the place.

'Tis useful, very useful is the tract, tract, tract
Which he drops upon my lap as he retires;
I tear it up and use it, it's a fact, fact, fact,
As a cleaner of the strongest of my "briars."

'Tis cheerful, very cheerful is the bell, bell, bell,
That invites me now to go and hear the news
That Jesus died that I might go to hell, hell, hell—
And at Crackton on a Sunday get the blues.

'Tis scorching, very scorching is the sun, sun, sun;
In a church, if you're as thirsty as a sink, [One,
You can have the blood of Christ, the Three in One, One,
But it's not a very satisfying drink.

'Tis crummy, very crummy is the Lamb, Lamb, Lamb,
Which is served upon the Church Communion plate;
A snare and a delusion and a sham, sham, sham;
For my steak at half-past one I'd rather wait.

'Tis painful, very painful is the view, view, view;
Ladies leaving church for luncheon in their silks;
It makes me think of Christ, the ragged Jew, Jew, Jew,
And his meal of bread and sprats, or bread and whelks.

'Tis lively, very lively by the sea, sea, sea,
On the day that's dedicated to the Lord,
At Crackton. Rule Britannia! She's as free, free, free,
As a donkey that is tethered by a cord.

ESS JAY BEE.

Witchcraft.

REFERENCE was recently made in this column to the *Lancashire Witches*. Belief in witchcraft still prevails in parts of Lancashire, also in the Isle of Man, and still more strongly in the Hebrides. A writer in the September part of *Chambers' Journal* gives some interesting anecdotes of the superstitions which persist among the Hebrideans. Belief in witchcraft is said to have a "strong and living hold" on some of the people of these Outer Isles.

An instance is given of a case heard before the Stornoway Sheriff's Court so lately as November, 1899, in which witnesses deposed to there being several witches in the township, one of whom was charged with so bewitching cows that the substance of their milk passed into the milk of the witch's cow. The husband of the alleged witch stated in court that "When he heard the rumours about his wife he got three of the constables of the township to come and examine his cow's milk to see if it were any richer than usual, as would be the case if the substance of Mrs. A.'s cow's milk were present in it." Other evidence of this remarkable transubstantiation was given. The Sheriff-Substitute ridiculed the notion of witchcraft, but the Stornowegians stuck to it with absolute faith.

—Daily News.

High Life.

'Tis from high life high characters are drawn,
A saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn;
A judge is just, a chancellor juster still;
A gownsmen learn'd, a bishop what you will;
Wise, if a minister; but, if a king,
More wise, more learn'd more just, more everything.

—Pope.

Acid Drops.

"Mr. Pigott at Clapton" has been a godsend to some of the London papers. Having made capital—perhaps we should say "copy"—out of him during a dull week, they found they had given him a tremendous advertisement, and the Agapemonites and the Ark of the Covenant had become almost household words. The result was the visit of a rowdy mob to Mr. Pigott's church on Sunday morning. Some of them got inside and interrupted there. Others had to howl outside. When the service was over a rush was made for Mr. Pigott, who would probably have been beaten to death if he had not been protected by the police.

This rowdy mob had no business there at all. Mr. Pigott has a perfect right to hold his services in peace and quiet. People who don't believe in what he says have a perfect right to stay away. If they go inside to create disorder, or gather outside to cause a riot, they should be driven away without the slightest ceremony. The law should be no respecter of persons. Its protection should be given, and at whatever cost, to the humblest or most obnoxious citizen who is attending to his own affairs in a legal manner without molesting his neighbors.

Probably most of the mob who went to the Ark of the Covenant were simply there for a lark. The idea of their having any serious purpose is really absurd. The overwhelming majority of them, no doubt, were professed Christians. Why then are they in such a state of excitement over the case of Mr. Pigott? He is an "impostor." Well, are there no more of that ilk in London? He is a "blasphemer." Well, there were plenty of that ilk in the hostile mob, judging by their language. Yes, but Mr. Pigott gives himself out to be Jesus Christ. Well, what of that? Is that the only absurdity taught in the name of religion? All the Catholic priests in this country claim to be able to work miracles. They take a wafer, give it to the faithful in the sacrament, and swear it is (not symbolically, but actually) the very body of Christ. They take some wine in a cup, drink it themselves, and declare it is the very blood of Christ. Mr. Pigott stands up and says he *is* Christ. Which, then, is the greater miracle? Is it not less wonderful that Jesus Christ, being as it is supposed a spirit, should enter the living body of a human being, than that he should enter the dead substance of bread and liquor? But we are used to the Catholic nonsense. It has lost its novelty. Mr. Pigott's nonsense is something fresh. And hence these tears.

We have another word for the Protestants. They believe that Jesus Christ, or God the Son, entered the human embryo in the Virgin Mary. Now we beg to ask them whether it is any stranger, except for the novelty of the thing, that Jesus Christ, or God the Son, should enter the full-grown body of Mr. Pigott? Would it not be better if the Protestants cleared their own intellectual sight before trying to black Mr. Pigott's eyes? If he is a lunatic, it is for his friends to look after him; if he is an impostor, it will be the duty of the police to look after him. That is, if he violates the law; for, as a matter of fact, all forms of religion are impostures *within* the law. Anyhow, it is no business of an irresponsible crowd. We don't want mob law and lynching in this country.

Yale and Harvard Universities, the two greatest in America, have each decided to establish a missionary organization somewhat on the lines of the Oxford mission in Calcutta and the Cambridge mission in Delhi. Yale has selected China and Harvard has selected India. But why on earth should they go so far away to convert people to Christianity? There are 600,000 Jews in New York. Why not try to convert them first? They are the worst "heathen" of all. Some "heathen" simply don't believe in Christ, but the Jews crucified him. Yes, the Yale and Harvard missionaries should begin on the New York Jews.

"God" ought to be arrested. At an inquest held at Maidstone on the body of Charles Reed, twenty-one, hop-picker, who was killed by lightning during the late disastrous storm, the jury returned a verdict of "Death by the Visitation of God." If the jury meant this the Coroner's warrant should have been issued immediately.

The Croydon ghost is unmasked. For months past a black ghost has been smashing the windows of a certain house. At length a midnight vigil was arranged, the ghost was captured, and turned out to be a lady against whom the owner of the house had started a libel action. The lady has been bound over in the police-court not to play the ghost any more.

Dr. Clifford is taken to task by somebody of "greater importance" than the President of the National Secular Society. Lord Halifax, of the English Church Union, brings him to book for saying that Prebendary Webb Peplow had "heard Lord Halifax publicly declare that there never could be peace and concord until the occupant of the chair of St. Augustine sat at the feet of the occupant of the chair of St. Peter." Lord Halifax says he never said so, and he does not believe Prebendary Webb Peplow ever said he did. He calls upon Dr. Clifford (in brief) to prove his words or eat them. One or the other he will have to do, for Lord Halifax cannot be ignored. Not that he has a much vaster supply of brains than Mr. Foote, but because of his "higher position."

Colonel de Saint Rémy, an aristocratic French officer, as the name denotes, was ordered by General Frater to send troops to enable the Prefect of Moribichan to close a conventual school at Lanouée. The Colonel replied that he could not "execute an order which wounded his sentiments and his faith." For this he was tried by court martial at Nantes, found guilty, and sentenced to one day's imprisonment. Of course the "Nationalists"—that is, the Church and Army party—were delighted, for the trivial sentence was meant to throw contempt upon the Republican government. But the last chapter of the story was yet to come. General André, the War Minister, who appears to be a Freethinker, has struck Colonel de Saint Rémy off the Army List. The Catholic soldier, with a conscience too tender to obey orders, but not sensitive enough to resign his commission in consequence, will now have to seek consolation among the duchesses, countesses, priests, bought journalists, and half-baked poets, who represent the Royalist faction in Paris.

Here are two items of news from a recent London evening paper:—"The King went out deerstalking in Abergeldie Forest yesterday morning, in fine weather." "It is announced that their Majesties hope to attend a thanksgiving service in Westminster Abbey on Sunday, October 19." We wonder what God, if there be a God, thinks of this mixture of deerstalking and piety. King Edward seems bent on overdoing the religious side of his business. The sensible portion of his subjects will be tempted to say, "Something too much of this."

Herbert Booth, son of William Booth, having left the Salvation Army, has gone to America, where it is reported he intends to enter business. This is a point of the most trifling importance, but the newspapers seem to think it concerns the public on both sides of the Atlantic. The *Westminster Gazette* actually sent a representative to the Salvation Army headquarters to make inquiries. It was there stated that Herbert Booth had left "the Army" primarily on grounds of ill health. "There was no estrangement," the official said, "in the real sense of the word, though we do not wish to disguise the fact that Mr. Booth did not see eye to eye with the General over a few matters, chiefly of an administrative character." This is letting the cat out of the bag, if not tail and all. Enough is shown to satisfy the curious in such matters that the Booths are anything but a happy family.

Our sympathies in this particular matter go out to the old "General" rather than to his sons and sons-in-law. It looks very much as if they were in too much of a hurry to "divide the empire of Alexander." On general grounds their action is simply absurd, for the Salvation Army always has been, is now, and always will be, an autocracy. It could not exist otherwise. And, such as it is, it is the creation of William Booth. There is not a single one of his sons and daughters who would ever have been heard of in the world but for their tough and astute old father.

We learn from the newspapers that the Messiah has turned up at Clapton. His name is now Synth-Pigott. This is very nice of him. He cannot work at a carpenter's bench with a stylish name like that.

Professor Dewar's Belfast Address should be an eye-opener to some of the friends of the present Government. While the "Hotel Cecil" gang at Westminster are doing their utmost to cripple elementary education by handing it over to the control of the Church, and systematically starving every department of higher education, the Germans are stealing a march upon us, and leaving us ignominiously behind. This is what Professor Dewar said—and there is no higher authority:—"To his mind the really appalling thing was, not that the Germans had seized this or the other industry, or even that they might have seized on a dozen industries; it was that the German population had reached a point of general training and specialised equipment which it would take us two generations of hard and intelligently directed education work to attain; it was that Germany

possessed a natural weapon of precision which must give her an enormous initial advantage in any and every contest depending on disciplined and methodised intellect."

The fifth of the new volumes of *The Encyclopædia Britannica* opens with a prefatory essay by Benjamin Kidd, in which he attacks Herbert Spencer with great vigor. We fear, however, that the gambols of this Kidd will not materially affect the Synthetic Philosophy, except among members of the Young Men's Christian Association.

The *London Evangelist* contains a note on Elizabeth Cady Stanton, whom it refers to as "strange, fanciful, and heterodox in many of her opinions, but who is, nevertheless, a believer in God," and then goes on to say that "religion was the animating power and mainspring" of this reformer. Would the editor of the *London Evangelist* describe Voltaire and Paine as being religious in their opposition to Christianity? They were Deists no less than Mrs. Stanton.

"Providence" sent a storm over Mid-Kent which did damage to the tune of something over £100,000. Rain fell at the rate of 200 tons per acre, and hailstones five inches in circumference. At East Farleigh the church was swamped and the floor covered with soil. Two thousand hop-pickers in the vicinity were reduced to a deplorable condition. Several persons were killed by lightning, including an old Italian organ-grinder, who innocently took refuge under a tree. But, as Holy Writ says, the Lord found him there!

A telegram from Buenos Ayres says that "Providence" has been active in that part of the world. The town of Bolivar has been wiped out by a cyclone. "For his tender mercies are over all his works."

"Providence" plays a very curious part in the affairs of this planet. The other day President Roosevelt was "providentially" saved in a motor-car accident that killed two of his companions. Now we read in the *Daily Telegraph* that the movement of the regulator, constructed by "Honest George Graham" in the first half of the eighteenth century, showing on two dials sidereal and meantime respectively, has been "providentially" spared from the hands of the restoring watchmaker.

Thus do the terms of religion lose their significance in the course of civilisation. "Inspiration" originally meant that an outside spirit had got inside a man and was speaking through his organs. Now it means no more than a high degree of power in a natural faculty; so that we talk of the inspiration of the poet, the painter, the musician, and the orator. "Genius" originally meant an attendant spirit. Now it means only a special brain capacity, and has no supernatural significance whatever. In the same way "Providence" originally meant a direct interposition of God, while it now means no more than a bit of good luck in the midst of a lot of bad.

The enormous sale of the sixpenny edition of Huxley's *Rationalistic Essays* has forced the Christians to issue Wace's reply to Huxley at the same modest price. This will introduce Huxley's writings to thousands who did not know them.

There is real danger to our circulation in the boycott of this paper by the wholesale newsagents. Our readers will help us greatly by insisting on the supply of the *Freethinker*. It is advisable to place your orders for other literature at the same time as when ordering the *Freethinker*. If you buy your daily paper and your monthly magazine, or weekly periodical, at the same shop as the *Freethinker*, you will be a customer worth consideration by the newsagent. If our regular subscribers will remember this they will be doing us and the old cause a real service.

Christian Scientists in America claim to have cured a well-known trotter, but the owner of the animal attributes its improvement to the good offices of a veterinary surgeon.

If Christian Science can cure horses it ought to be able to cure asses. There is a large field for its curative efforts in the Christian world.

The Vicar of Gorleston is reported to have had a letter from a distinguished statesman expressing sympathy with his scheme for running theatres in connection with the churches in country villages. The distinguished statesman is Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. Ahem!

Jehovah made a blood-covenant with the Jews, and all Christians are in a blood-covenant (through Jesus Christ) with their God. Nothing could more clearly show the

savage origin of Judaism and Christianity. The idea of a blood-covenant is as follows. Savages only understand one relationship—the *blood* relationship; and their ideas of moral obligation are co-extensive with it. Our word "kind" comes from "kin," which means persons of the same blood. To be kind, therefore, is at bottom to act in the proper way to one of your own kindred. The savage does that at first, and no more. But as a tribe progresses and wants to trade and intermarry peaceably with other tribes, a way has to be found to bring the "strangers" within the blood relationship. This is done by drawing blood from a chief on either side, and letting it mingle. A blood-brotherhood is thus established, and the idea of moral obligation is extended accordingly. In Africa this rite is extremely common. Stanley had to practise it again and again with tribal chiefs in his search for Livingstone. And to the honor of the negroes it must be said that they faithfully observe the blood-brotherhood and are true to it to the very death.

Christianity ingenuity, however, is teaching the poor benighted African a way of escape from the blood-brotherhood obligation. Dr. Bagshawe, out in the Soudan, hearing that some of the chiefs wished to help the British but dared not, owing to the blood-brotherhood they had formed with the mutineers, managed to persuade them that he could undo the rite for them. He injected a dose of apomorphia into the cicatrix of the incision made in the blood-brotherhood rite. This made the patient violently sick in about five minutes. A few nauseous draughts completed the operation. The spell was broken and the blood-brotherhood annulled. Major Delmé-Radcliffe, who reports on this matter, calls Dr. Bagshawe's operation "a sufficiently ridiculous ceremony" which was gone through to "free their consciences." We should call it an object-lesson in the way in which civilised people play fast and loose with religion when it suits their convenience.

Rev. R. G. Macintyre, of the United Free Church, Maxwelltown, has a new remedy for Sabbath desecration. Preaching to his congregation after his return home from his holidays, he referred to the introduction of brass band music on the Dock Park the previous Sunday, and "prayed God they might not have a similar experience again." But we guess it will take a lot of praying to shut up that band.

Mr. Macintyre observed that there were "special times that God had marked off for himself, and the Sabbath day was one of them, when we were not allowed to do our own will, but must do the will of the Lord." What the reverend gentleman really means by this pious jargon is that special times should be "marked off" for the ministers of religion, when they may do business while other people have nothing else to do but to trade with them. The Sabbath simply means "a close time" for the clergy.

Marie Corelli's foolish romance, *The Mighty Atom*, was reviewed at considerable length in our columns soon after its appearance. We did not imagine, though, that such a silly production was ever likely to lead to a tragedy. But it has done so down at Maperton. A clergyman's son, Alfred Gosse, aged nineteen, after his father's death had lived with his step-father, George Edmund Norton, a farmer. During the past year he had been very studious, and latterly had "turned to religion." While in this dangerous state he got hold of *The Mighty Atom*, in which a poor lad, oppressed by his Freethinking father (as lads generally are, of course), hung himself with his sash. This seems to have furnished him with a hint for his own destruction. Going to his bedroom, he stripped himself of his ordinary clothing, dressed himself in his dead father's cassock, on which was a cross made of sticks. He opened the Prayer-Book at the burial service, and placed it beside a letter for his friends. Then he hung himself, and was found dead in the morning.

The letter this poor lad left is not without interest, for it shows how religion fits in with insanity. One passage of it ran as follows: "To thee who reads this. This is not self-murder. I have long wanted to become a monk. If thine eye offend thee pluck it out. If thy life offend thee give it back to him who gave it to thee." He then referred to the disposal of a few things belonging to him, and concluded: "O Lord, receive my soul; my last thoughts are of thee." In reference to the cross of wood, he wrote: "I ask that a cross be put on my breast in my grave; bury me in this holy robe."

The jury brought in the usual verdict in such cases—temporary insanity. It would never do to have the poor lad buried at midnight at the meeting of four cross roads "with a stake in his inside," as Tom Hood says.

Marie Corelli can now boast that her writings have some influence. She ought to make the most of it in her future advertisements.

The "Rev." Sam Small, evangelist and temperance orator, was billed for a lecture in Brattleboro, Vt., Aug. 25, but after being introduced to a large audience he made only a few incoherent remarks and was then led from the platform. A cursory examination of his condition showed that the Rev. Mr. Small was drunk. He admits it was whiskey that caused his downfall, and says he has no further explanation to make or excuse to offer. The incident should close his mouth for a season on the weaknesses of his fellow man,—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is too something or other for the Denver clergy. They tried unsuccessfully to banish it from the Public Library. Mark has written a characteristic letter to the *Denver Post* on the subject. Our readers will probably like to see the conclusion:—"There's nobody for me to attack in this matter even with soft and gentle ridicule, and I shouldn't ever think of using a grown-up weapon in this kind of a nursery. Above all, I couldn't venture to attack the clergymen whom you mention, for I have their habits and live in the same glass house which they are occupying. I am always reading immoral books on the sly and then selfishly trying to prevent other people from having the same wicked good time. No, if Satan's morals and Funston's are preferable to Huck's let Huck's take a back seat; they can stand any ordinary competition, but not a combination like that. And I'm not going to defend them, anyway."

Dr. C. T. Aveling, who died while bathing at Mullion, in Cornwall, was we believe a brother of the late Dr. E. B. Aveling, who was connected with the Secular movement under Charles Bradlaugh, and afterwards with the Socialist movement.

A Lancashire bench of magistrates, some weeks ago, illustrated the glorious certainty and impartiality of English law. They exempted one man from having his child vaccinated, and they sent another man to Lancaster Castle for not having his child vaccinated. The prisoner was Mr. John F. Back. Besides being an anti-vaccinator, he happens to be a Spiritualist, and the *Two Worlds* naturally makes the most of the fact; indeed, in reading its account of an interview with him one might almost fancy he was in prison for Spiritualism. We are glad, however, that the editor, Mr. Will Phillips, has paid his co-religionist (shall we say?) a visit in Lancaster Castle. He will now be able to form some idea of what the editor of the *Freethinker* had to undergo in Holloway Gaol. If a week or two of confinement began to tell on Mr. Back, how would he have pulled through twelve months of it? And in Mr. Foote's case the treatment was that of an ordinary prisoner; no meals sent in, no newspapers, and a letter only once a quarter. But this does not lessen our sympathy with Mr. Back. We thank him, on behalf of many lovers of freedom, for making a gallant stand against a tyrannous and ridiculous law.

Lord Overtoun, called by the Glasgow labor leaders a rank "sweater," and apparently with much truth, is more considerate of the souls of strangers than of the bodies of his workmen. He spends large sums on religious objects, and it is said that he pays a large salary to a certain Scotch revivalist. Recently he addressed a Glasgow audience, and had a fling at the Higher Critics. If the Bible is not inspired, he said, the labor of the critics is wasted; and if it is inspired there is no need of the higher critics. But the *Edinburgh Evening News* says that his lordship is a critic himself, and only differs from those he condemns in being "less learned and less discerning." Not even Lord Overtoun can very well believe that the whale swallowed Jonah, or that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, or reconcile the discrepancies in the first chapter of Genesis. His lordship, therefore, picks and chooses like the critics he denounces, and the *News* declares that "Lord Overtoun only illustrates the old definition that orthodoxy is my doxy and heterodoxy is the other fellow's doxy."

A prisoner under sentence of death for murder thanked God (in a letter to friends) that he was in very good health and strength. This is worthy to stand near the story of the man who was on his way to be hung at Tyburn. They gave him the usual pot of beer at a halting-place, and he blew the froth off the top before drinking it. Being asked why he did so, he replied that he understood froth was "not good for the health."

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, September 21, Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool: 3, "Marie Corelli's Miraculous Masterpiece"; 7, "Earthquakes, Volcanoes, and God."

September 28, Birmingham. October 5, Glasgow; 12 and 19, Athenæum Hall; 26, Manchester; November 9, Camberwell.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 21, a., Victoria Park; e., Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road; 28, a., Victoria Park; e., Athenæum Hall. October 5, Birmingham; 12, Glasgow; 19, a., Brockwell Park; e., Camberwell; 26, Athenæum. November 2, Athenæum; 9, Birmingham; 16, Leicester; 23, Liverpool.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.
- E. SELF earnestly trusts that the good work done in the past by the Camberwell Branch will be fully recognised by the Free-thought party.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your ever welcome cuttings.
- X. Y. Z.—Much obliged, but we had already enough in type on the subject.
- J. G. BARTRAM (Newcastle-on-Tyne) writes:—"You will see by the *Chronicle* I am sending that Mrs. Besant has been lecturing here. Many of her old-time admirers, as well as many of the younger generation of Secularists, mustered to hear her; but, alas, only to be pained by the piteous spectacle of this ex-Freethought advocate outspooking the spookiest of spookologists, with a dogmatism that outdid that of the most dogmatic priest. She talked as glibly of heaven as though it were in the next street and she had lived there. She also talked of God and Christ and the architect of the universe as though she were on familiar terms with each of them. One old Secularist was heard to remark that he had never listened to more 'downright rot' from any pulpit in Newcastle." Mr. Bartram hopes the local "saints" will have an early opportunity of hearing Mr. Foote expose the fallacies of Theosophy. We hope so too.
- E. CHAPMAN.—Mr. Foote had already written you offering South Shields a date.
- A. G. LYE.—Shall be pleased to see you at Birmingham, with any other Coventry friends who can look over. Glad you recollect the needs and claims of the Camberwell Branch.
- L. MERCHANT.—Comte's *General View of Positivism* is published separately from the rest of the *Positive Polity*, in a single volume, price 2s. 6d. The translation was done by Dr. J. H. Bridges, and extremely well done too, we believe. Reeves, of Charing Cross-road, formerly of Fleet-street, publishes and sells for the London Positivists.
- J. HERRINGTON.—See this week's list of acknowledgments. Your pamphlet has not reached us.
- THE CAMBERWELL SECULAR HALL FUND.—E. Self, 2s. 6d.; H. G. (Loughboro Junction), 5s.; O. Beckwith, 1s.; J. Herrington, 1s.; T. Francis, 1s.; F. A. Davies, 10s.; A. G. Lye, 2s. 6d.; R. E. D., 2s. 6d.; C. J., 5s.; C. T. (second sub.), 2s. 6d.
- W. TAYLOR, 14 Church-road, Heaton Morris, Stockport, is willing to supply "Constant Reader," if he will communicate, with what information he seeks concerning the late Bishop Fraser.
- R. E. D., who sends a subscription to the Camberwell Fund from Manxland, says that "Never were more desperate and frantic efforts made by the parsons to keep the silly Christian fraud alive than to-day." The obvious moral is that Freethinkers also should be up and doing.
- C. J.—See your Camberwell subscription in the list. The other will be acknowledged elsewhere. Thanks.
- C. T.—There is a good deal of truth in what you say. Some of your suggestions would be carried out if we had premises of our own in London, but they are not easy in a hall that is only hired for a couple of hours on Sunday evenings. Thanks for your personal good wishes. Pleased to hear you think we "look good enough for another hundred years."
- WHITMORE LEDGER.—Shall appear. Thanks for the kind expressions in your letter.
- H. E. DODSON.—Your letter arrives on Tuesday evening just as we are going to press. It is too late now to deal with the Brockwell Park trouble in the present issue.
- PAPERS RECEIVED.—Umpire—Bury Times—Railway Times (Bombay)—Truthseeker (New York)—Freethought Magazine—Birmingham Gazette—Liberator—Edinburgh Evening News—Recorder—Searchlight—Morning Advertiser—Printing Trade Cover—Newtownards Chronicle—Torch of Reason—El Libre Pensamiento—Dumfries Standard—Two Worlds—Open Court.
- 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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Sugar Plums.

THERE was a capital, and much improved, audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Miss Marie Corelli's Miraculous Masterpiece." Evidently the lecture was very much enjoyed; one auditor expressed a hope to see it in print. This is not likely, but Mr. Foote will presently deal with Miss Corelli's new romance, *Temporal Power*, in our columns.

Mr. Foote lectures at Liverpool to-day, and will doubtless meet a good rally of his south-west Lancashire friends. Formerly he has delivered three lectures on Sundays in the provinces. On this occasion, however, he will only deliver two. Although in excellent health at present, he is advised to go a little slower than of old, at least for a time. This advice is not easy to follow in all things, but it is possible to draw the line in respect to the number of lectures in a single day. Two lectures, if a man puts himself into them, make a heavy day's work; and three lectures make a *too* heavy day's work. After all, the morning audiences are never colossal, and dropping that one meeting will never cause bankruptcy.

Mr. C. Cohen had good meetings last Sunday in Brockwell and Victoria Parks. He now follows Mr. Foote for two Sundays at the Athenæum Hall. His subject this evening (Sept. 21) will be "The Present Position of Religion and Science." In view of the British Association Congress at Belfast this ought to attract a good audience.

The Camberwell Branch will want that £50, for which we have been appealing, almost immediately. Those who intend to assist should lose no time in doing so. The holiday season is now pretty well over, and subscriptions should be flowing in more freely.

It appears that the Liberal University, at Silverton, Oregon, is to be shifted eastward to Kansas City. We read in its organ, *The Torch of Truth*, that of the 32,500 dollars already subscribed no less than 30,000 has come from those living East of the Missouri.

The *Boston Investigator* is the oldest Freethought paper in America. Mr. Washburn, its editor, is accomplished and eloquent. But we gather that he is not on good terms with Mammon. Somebody has been telling him that he will not make money by running the *Investigator*. He says he has known that all the time. "We don't expect to pay off the mortgage on our home," he writes, "by telling the truth about religious hypocrites and religious hypocrisy." Whereupon the editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, Mr. E. M. Macdonald, exclaims: "We congratulate Mr. Washburn on having a house on which to have a mortgage. The *Truthseeker* editor can't even afford that luxury." We congratulate them both on being "poor but honest," as the story says. Their fight for Freethought is far more honorable to them than would be the possession of a big estate. Nor is our own estate a very large one, and all there is of it is in the Bankruptcy Court.

The *Searchlight* reaches us from Waco, Texas. It is successor to the defunct *Independent Pulpit*, and is edited by Mr. Shaw, who keeps it up to a good general level. The September number to hand contains an article by Charles J. Finger, who appears to have been in London some fifteen or sixteen years ago. In recording his recollections he mentions the English Freethought journals, but has nothing flattering to say of any of them. What is it, we wonder, in the American atmosphere, that produces this sort of effect? Is it that the Americans, in spite of their enterprising press, are in consequence of their geographical position the most insular nation in the civilised world? It is a fact, anyhow, that while English Freethought journals have often contained generous references to their American contemporaries, it has always been a very rare thing to find even a genial reference to English contemporaries in American Freethought journals. For all that, though, we wish Mr. Shaw every success with his new enterprise. We are sure he *ought* to succeed.

Scepticism and the French Revolution.—IV.

AND be it observed that these ideas and opinions were not assumed to meet the political exigencies of the time, but as Lamartine points out "Robespierre felt these truths profoundly. It is necessary to state, however repugnant one may be to believe it, that he did not only feel them as a policy which borrows a chain from heaven to fetter men more surely with it; he felt them as a convinced sectary, who himself first bows down before the idea which he desires to make the people adore" (p. 434).

His speech to the Convention against Atheism occupies five pages of Lamartine's History, which he finished by proposing the following decree: "Art. 1st. The French people recognise the existence of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. Art. 2nd. They acknowledge that the worship worthy of the Supreme Being is the practice of the duties of man."

This was received with unanimous applause, and *fêtes* were decreed, the first and most solemn to be celebrated ten days after this profession of faith.

Saint Just, who brought so many to execution that he has been called "The Destroying Angel," and Couthon, the other members of the triumvirate, were of the same opinion as Robespierre. On the same occasion, says Lamartine, "Couthon, in an enthusiastic harangue, defied the Materialistic philosophers to deny the Sovereign Arbiter of the universe, in the presence of his works, or to deny Providence in the regeneration of a degraded people. The sight of this infirm and dying man, sustained within the Tribune by the arms of two of his colleagues, and confessing, amidst the blood he had scattered, his judge in heaven and the immortality of his soul, attested in Couthon the fanatic faith which concealed even from himself the atrocity of the means before the holiness of the end." And as we have seen, Saint Just denounced and brought to execution many of his victims solely on a charge of Atheism.

The 8th of June was the date fixed for the first of the *fêtes* in honor of the Supreme Being, and in the words of Lamartine—

"Robespierre awaited this day with the impatience of a man who is preparing to develop a great design, and fears lest death should snatch it from him before its accomplishment. Of all the missions which he believed to be within him, the highest, the most holy in his eyes, was the regeneration of the religious sentiment in the people."

At the break of day he was at the Tuileries awaiting the coming of his colleagues. He was for the first time in his life clothed as a representative in mission, says the historian. "A coat of paler blue than the coat of the members of the Convention; white waistcoat, yellow leather breeches, top boots, and a round hat with a quantity of tricolored ribands in it, attracted towards him universal attention. He held in his hand an enormous bouquet of flowers and wheat-ears, the first fruits of the year. He had in his haste forgotten the claims of humanity" (p. 448).

An immense amphitheatre had been arranged at the back of the Tuileries, descending step by step to the ground. In the centre was a tribune with a seat, much resembling a throne, reserved for Robespierre. Facing the seat a colossal group of emblematical figures, constructed of inflammable material, representing Atheism, Crime, and Vice, had been framed together by the painter David. "The idea of a God, says Lamartine, "was to reduce them to ashes."

Robespierre mounted the tribune and made an oration. "Frenchmen, Republicans!" said Robespierre, in a voice which he made to fill the space of his vast auditory; "at length has arrived the day for ever fortunate, which the French people have consecrated to the Supreme Being" (p. 450). When he had finished the people applauded. Strains of music filled the air, and thousands of voices sung the hymn of Marie Joseph Chénier (brother to Andre Chénier, the Atheist), commencing "Great God of an intrepid people" (the same hymn, be it noted, chanted

at the inauguration of the Goddess of Reason.) After the final chorus, "Robespierre, descending from the amphitheatre, set fire to the group of Atheism. The fire and smoke spread in the air at the acclamation of the multitude" (*Hist. of the Girondists*, vol. iii, p. 451).

We are now in a position to place a proper value upon the *Spectator* writer, that, "The Terrorists, were sceptics gone slightly lunatic." And the statement of Archdeacon Farrar, that the Reign of Terror was a "Reign of Atheism." These men were either stating what they knew to be a malignant falsehood, or else they were pitifully ignorant of the subject upon which they were writing.

Archdeacon Farrar is the shining light of the Church of England; his *Life of Christ* circulates by thousands. If we find such malice or ignorance emanating from those in the seats of the mighty of the Church, what are we to expect from the lower orders of the clergy of the Church of England.

The *Spectator* writer is wiser, or more cowardly, than the archdeacon, and vents his spite under the veil of anonymity; but it is a melancholy reflection that the editor of such a high class weekly should insert such an article, teeming, as it is, with malice and ignorance. And which every educated man who reads the article, must know to be utterly untrue.

The fact is, the Atheism of the French Revolution has been greatly exaggerated. Among the great men of the Revolution, the Atheists can be counted upon the fingers of one hand. Condorcet, the greatest writer of that time, was a convinced Atheist. Isnard and Andre, two of the greatest orators of the Revolution, were also Atheists. These were all condemned to death, Isnard alone escaping by flight.

Mirabeau and Clootz are classed as Atheists, but it is doubtful whether they were really so. Madame Roland, the heroic leader of the Girondists, "the noblest of all living Frenchwomen," as Carlyle calls her, is classed by Mathilde Blind, who wrote her life, as an Agnostic. Both Clootz and Madame Roland perished with the others in the "weltering storm" of the Revolution. The Atheist of to-day has every reason to be proud of the Atheists of the Revolution, whose lives form a pattern and inspiration, long after their headless bodies have returned to the elements from whence they sprang, as I propose to show in a future article.

WALTER MANN.

The Personal Appearance of Christ.

I DARESAY that many Christians have wondered as to the personal appearance of Christ. There are many pictures which pretend to give portraits of him from his earliest childhood up to the time of his crucifixion; but, notwithstanding, no one can say with certainty that these are truthful representations. Indeed, it is a most unfortunate fact for Christians that they have no authentic portrait of the founder of their religion, for it reduces them to that expedient which has served them so well in the making and expounding of their Gospels—an unhesitating imagination. Now, it is very well known that, if you try to draw a mental picture of someone whom you have merely heard of, you pretty nearly always go wide of the mark. This always happens with romantic young ladies who try to imagine the writers of their favorite love stories, who generally, and perhaps happily, do not come up to the heroic expectations conceived of them.

Draper says:—

"Among the earlier fathers—Justin Martin and Tertullian—there was an impression that the personal appearance of our Lord was ungainly; that he was short of stature; and, at a later period Cyril says, mean of aspect 'even beyond the ordinary race of men.' But these unsuitable delineations were generally corrected in the fourth century, it being then recognised that God could not dwell in a humble form or low stature. The model eventually received was perhaps that described in the spurious epistle of Lentulus to the Roman senate:

'He was a man of tall and well-proportioned form; his countenance severe and impressive, so as to move the beholders at once with love and awe. His hair was of an amber color, reaching to his ears with no radiation, and standing up from his ears clustering and bright, and flowing down over his shoulders and parted on the top according to the fashion of the Nazarenes. The brow high and open; the complexion clear, with a delicate tinge of red; the aspect frank and pleasing; the nose and mouth finely formed; the beard thick, parted, and of the color of the hair; the eyes blue, and exceedingly bright.' Subsequently the oval countenance assumed an air of melancholy, which, though eminently suggestive, can hardly be considered as the type of manly beauty."

Thus, from a miserable, ungainly, undersized misfortune, Christ was gradually improved until he came to being something like the Grecian Apollo; but this more suitable delineation is given in a spurious epistle to the Roman senate; and, if the epistle is spurious, there is very little to say for the truth of the description of Christ contained in it. It is peculiar, but the terms "spurious" seems strangely suggestive of Christianity.

Some worthy Christians say that we have, all of us, some trace of the likeness of Christ in our features. If such is the case, then Christ must have had a most unfortunate physiognomy. A face in which were compounded the characteristics of Bill Sykes, Pecksniff, Fagan, Squeers, and all the rest of us, sane, insane, deformed, etc., must have been a spectacle for the angels to weep at. Surely nothing like it has been seen before or since.

Now, even supposing Christ to have been a man of passable appearance, his mode of living was eminently unsuitable for the preservation of good looks. He seems to have lived somewhat after the fashion of the fakirs of India—sometimes in the towns, sometimes in the desert, sometimes on the lake of Galilee. "He had not where to lay his head"; so, therefore, must have slept in the open, with his clothes on. As he appears to have worn his garments year in and year out, his condition must have been more interesting than pleasant. Besides, long, flowing hair, though it may look very picturesque, requires a considerable amount of attention; however, beyond once receiving a copious greasing, Christ's hair seems never to have known the luxury of a shampoo.

Furthermore, as Christ advised his followers not to think of this life, but of the life to come, he probably gave very little attention to his bodily welfare. Of what use would it be to wash himself or change his linen when the body was but the vile prison of clay for the soul? Also, washing the face in the open in hot countries is conducive to unpleasant results, causing the skin to blister and peel off; therefore Christ may have been like the Boer in South Africa, who did not wash before sunrise because it was too cold, and did not wash after sunrise because it made his face smart.

Now, if Christ ever lived (which is a moot point), he was undoubtedly like his fellow-countrymen in appearance—allowing, of course, for individual differences which every man and woman possess. That he was more intelligent than his contemporaries is not evidenced in what are said to be his sayings. We should think he was a man who, like Mohammed, saw visions, and took them for realities. His credulity, with his fanatical tendency and the credulous disposition of his oriental followers, were the primary factors; and Christianity, emerging from the mind of a half-crazy Jew, set out on its hateful career through the world.

JAMES H. WATERS.

The Only True God.

The earth-god Freedom, the lonely
Face lightening, the footprint unshod,
Not as one man crucified only
Nor scourged with but one life's rod;
The soul that is substance of nations,
Reincarnate with fresh generations;
The great god Man, which is God.

—A. C. Swinburne.

Words o' Cheer.*

Lo! Calvin, Knox, and Luther cry,
I hae the truth and I and I.
Puir sinners, if ye gang agley
The Deil will hae ye
And then the Lord will stand abeigh
And will na sae ye.
But Hoolie! hoolie! Na sa fast.
When Gabriel shall blaw his blast
And heaven and carth awa hae past,
These lang syne saints
Shall find baith Deil and hell at last
Mere pious feints.
The upright, honest-hearted man
Who strives to do the best he can,
Need never fear the Church's ban
Or hell's damnation,
For God will need nae special plan
For his salvation.
The ane wha feels our deepest needs
Recks little how man counts his beads,
For righteousness is not in creeds
Or solemn faces,
But rather lies in kindly deeds
And Christian graces.
Then never fear, wi' purpose leal,
A head to think, a heart to feel
For human woe, for human weal,
Nae preaching loon
Your sacred birthright e'er can steal
To heaven aboon.
Tak tent o' truth and heed thee well,
The man who sins mak's his own hell,
There's nae worse deil than himsel,
But God is strongest,
And when puir human hearts rebel
He haulds out longest.

ROBERT BURNS.

A Conscientious Sabbatarian.

A commercial travelling man landed at Edinburgh, Scotland, one Saturday night, too late to get out of town for Sunday. The next day he found that there was actually no form of amusement in the whole city to assist him in whiling away the day. He went to the proprietor of the hotel to see if he could suggest a way of passing the remainder of the day. The landlord took pity on the stranger and took him to one of the rooms in the house in which a number of Scotchmen were playing a game called "nap," which is a sort of modification of "seven up." They were playing for a shilling a point, so that the game was a pretty stiff one. The stranger got in the game and played very cautiously, for he was quite sure that the players, or at least some of them, were cheating. One solemn-faced Scot, he was especially sure, he caught cheating a number of times. He began whistling a part of some vagrant tune. The Scot who had been cheating arose from the table and threw down the cards. "What is the matter?" the other players asked. "I'm gangin' awa'," the Scot answered, glaring at the stranger. "I'll play cards wi' no mon that whistles on the Sabbath."—*New York Journal*.

Senator Frye's Story.

"When I was up in Maine recently," said Senator Frye, "I was summoned to prepare a will for a man who was very ill. It was necessary, of course, to secure two witnesses, and they had to be sent for. While we were waiting for them to arrive the man seemed to get worse, and I thought it my duty, no minister being present, to talk seriously to him. I told him he was very ill, and that it was likely he would soon depart this life. 'And are you ready to meet this great change?' I asked him. 'I will be,' was the reply, 'as soon as those damned witnesses get here.'"

* This poem comes to me (says Dr. Paul Carus, in the *Open Court*, Chicago) through the courtesy of a Scotch gentleman of high position in the banking world. He received it from a countryman of his, and the poem purports to be an unpublished production of Robert Burns's muse. But my authority, while leaving me at liberty to use the poem, requested me not to mention his name for the reason that he has his grave doubts as to the authenticity of the verses. The poem is too good to have remained so long unpublished. There is no doubt that, upon the whole, the language is that of Burns; but its resemblance is so close that it is more likely that of a clever imitator compiling Burns's most characteristic expressions than of Burns himself. In spite of these doubts it seems not impossible that the poem is genuine.

San Genaro.

The miracle of miracles.—POPE PASCAL.

The age of miracles is past! The font of faith is dry!

"Their age is with us now" swift comes the myriad-voiced reply.

"We've hundreds of relics, thousands of priests, and millions of devotees;

The murdered bones of the martyrs yet can heal our rheumatological knees;

We hold enough of the Holy Cross to build a ship of the line;

There are tons of nails and thorns and things left as a sacred sign,

Two or three "Ecce Homo" scrolls* Time's ravages have stood,

Three or four winding-sheets, quarts of tears, and gallons of His blood,†

The tail of the donkey which He bestrode on the way to the feast of branches,

With a bottled sigh that St. Joseph heaved when he saw it cut from its haunches,‡

We've the cup and the bread§ that St. Peter took from the room of the Ultimate Supper,

With marvellous foresight, e'en while the hostess snored down the kitchen scupper."

But the chiefest miracle is wrought by the blood of Mr. Genaro,

That boils twice every year in a way to make your ox eyes stare-O.

In Napoli town while the Christian crowd fervently truly prays,

Or raves in hysteria better still, and its pious pittance pays

To Holy Church—all it can spare—all that is left from the

shameless extortion

Of a town—you will own—where the tradesmen all—in their way—are a moral abortion.

But now for the legend how Diocletian,

With no respect for Roman or Grecian,

Or for the cloth of century fourth,

Made Bishop Genaro the butt of his wrath.

How he made up his mind to put out his lights,

And had him shut up for three days and three nights

[There are always some threes in a sacred plot]

In an oven or furnace heated white hot.

But the saint was unharmed and the moral was pointed.

Ah! who could roast the Lord's anointed?

Yet the Emperor swore that he'd have that man's gore

Though he might have to wait for years a score;

So he had him bound fast to a forest tree

Where "most fearful wild fowls" were roving free,

But of course as you'll guess each terrible beast

Turned up its nose at the sainted feast,

After just licking his saintship's toes.

Now what's to be done when a man won't do?

Diocletian hit on the recipe

And cut off his head to obtain his bleed.

A saint with no brains is a saint indeed!

But he causes more trouble. That very same night

A man of Naples awoke in a fright.

For he heard the ghost of Genaro's voice say

"Get thee at once to the Thorny North-wind Way

And find my head and a bit of my finger,

Bring them to Napoli—don't linger,

That the faithful may see and appreciate me."

No sooner said than the thing was done,

* The scroll is at Rome and Toulouse.

† Christ's blood is exhibited at Rome, Bologna, Mantova, and Sanzana in Italy alone; his tears are at Treveri, Vienna, and Orleans.

‡ This may have been the reason, but the sigh exists in a bottle at Blois, while the donkey's tail is to be found at Poitiers.

§ The cup is at Lyons and at Viviers in France, as well as Valenza in Spain. The bread is preserved in the church of San Salvador in Spain. Peter seems to have cleared off with most of the crockery, and in fact everything movable, on this occasion even to the table, preserved still at Rome in San Giovanni in Laterano. Holy Mother Church claims to have obtained all these things through Peter. But then Peter always was her handy man. Some other odd relics, worth quotation, perhaps, are the following: Virgin Mary's milk at Naples, Rome, and Mugello; window through which Angel Gabriel passed at Rome, and the same window at Loreto. At Jerusalem a few rays of the Star of Bethlehem have been on view; there are also in existence six bodies of the Magi, one set at Milan, and the other at Colonia. This modest miracle of duplication is of course outdone in innumerable instances; for example, it is estimated that there are in existence 1,500 cases (weighing several tons in all) of St. Paul's bones. Even this, perhaps, does not supersede the miracle (better known to British readers) of the multiplication of the loaves at the feeding of the five thousand. A loaf of this bread, by the way, is still preserved at Rome and at San Salvatore (Spain).

The head came to Naples ere rising of sun.
And it happened that day that a pious dame
Brought some of the blood of that corpse so game;
And it danced as if crazy—it blushed a deep red
On approaching once more it's old comrade the head.
It bubbled and boiled in that goblet or cup
Just like ginger ale when you unscrew the stopper
In a way that's considered quite saintly and proper.
And since that great day each September and May
It goes through the very same antics. But stay!
Colletta relates how, when Championnet
Happened to march down Napoli way,
The blood remained thick; and a precious to-do
Arose as the people began to boo-hoo
And to hint that the saint wished to make a complaint
Of his holy displeasure. But the General at leisure
Sized up the affair—took the clericals' measure—
Sent his *carte-de-visite*, and asked them to quiz it.
There was writ: "Mark my words. I'll make saints of you
all

If that blood doesn't boil within half an hour."

And, most strange to relate, in no time at all
It boiled up like old times, with intensified power.

Garibaldi, since then, with the same sort of *biz*,

Let the parsons soon see when his blood was *riz*—
Made them offer a prayer to the saint; that *ghee whiz*
Prevailed on his grace and induced him to *fiz*.

Dearly beloved Christian brother,

If haply you're Protestant—not if you're t'other—
You will smile as you read of these wonders; you know

They take place too near, in this very same year;
Your miracles were such a long time ago—

So very far off. "But," you say, with a snort,
"These Catholics are such a *very* low sort."

They're the very same people that gave you your miracles,
With your ghosts and your saints and pious empiricals;

When they were half-civilised—(you were far worse).
The fact of it is—in terms rather terse—

You're fond of blood; between us and the post
You like the murder as well as the ghost.

You like the Old Book.....and gloat o'er the details
Of its glorified P'lice News, and ghosts that it retains.

But take my advice: keep your gold in your purse,
And your ghosts will soon fade in a prelatric curse.

G. GUARDIABOSCO.

The Chinese Devils,

NOT SO BLACK AFTER ALL.

A STRIKING story is told as to a narrow escape of Mrs. Ford, one of the missionaries of the China Inland Mission, who yesterday set sail from Southampton, during the Boxer riots two years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Ford were fleeing from the central province of Honan, with their nine-months-old baby, and on part of the route a small escort of soldiers had been given them. The soldiers, however, were sullen and restive; they dared not kill the missionaries themselves, but they incited others to do it, and kept telling the people: "The foreigners have no influence; they are quite powerless."

At one place an angry crowd collected round the inn where the missionaries had taken shelter, and things got so threatening that it seemed as if they had not many minutes to live. Acting on a sudden inspiration, Mr. Ford picked up the baby, walked boldly out with it into the crowd, and made it "chin-chin," giving the pretty Chinese salutation with hands and head. The effect was electrical. The murderous crowd were charmed, and the baby's salute saved the lives of all three!

Mrs. Ford had an equally remarkable escape in 1896. Miss Hodgson, as she then was, had just gone to a new station, and had never even been out in the streets, when a formidable riot broke out, and the mission-house was looted. She stood in the garret on a trap-door while the pillage went on below, until, fearing the place would be fired, she rushed down and jumped out of a window. Three times she was struck down by the crowd, but finally escaped, and ran out into the unknown streets, chased by a yelling mob. At last, turning a corner, she saw two women at a cottage door, and, pushing past them, shut herself in the inner room. The crowd followed, and, being convinced she must have entered there, rushed into the house. The leading man of the crowd opened the door, and Miss Hodgson, who was too much exhausted to speak, motioned him away. To her astonishment, he closed the door and told his companions the room was empty.

—Daily News.

Let me assure you my sleep is never disturbed about the destiny of the wicked; I feel much more concern about the future state of the righteous.—Henry James.

Correspondence.

JOSEPHUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I think we may conclude that if it was agreed that Herodias should come to Antipas as soon as he returned from Rome, it was understood also that the wife of Antipas should be divorced without delay. The marriage with Herodias would have followed shortly, so that I think I was justified in saying that the marriage was practically coincident with the visit to Rome or the return from Rome. My idea was that a few months would have covered the whole series of transactions. But it appears that the daughter of Aretas, having discovered in his absence her husband's intentions, induced him on his return from Rome to send her to Macherus, where she disclosed the whole plot to her father. Now, it seems to me that there must have been some delay between the arrival of Aretas's daughter and her father's declaration of war against Antipas. For Josephus tells us that Antipas had also some quarrel with him about their "limits at the country of Gemalitis." "So they raised armies on both sides and prepared for war," etc. It is, I think, reasonable to conclude that this quarrel about Gemalitis took place subsequently to the Herodias affair, for armies were raised on both sides, which would or could hardly have been the case had Aretas started a punitive expedition against Antipas immediately after the disclosures of his daughter. He would certainly not have given "that fox" Antipas notice of his intention to punish him. He would have raided his country unawares. Could the negotiations over Gemalitis have been protracted over a few years? And finally failing, did Aretas decide to kill two birds with one stone? I find "Abracadabra" interprets the word "quarrel," used by Josephus in the opening sentence of chapter v., book xviii., of the Antiquities, as meaning the circumstances of Herod's relations with Herodias. I take it to mean the actual war of Aretas against Antipas, which is an important difference. For it would neutralise the force of "Abracadabra's" remark that "the circumstances which led up to the war took place about this time, that is, A.D. 34 or 35." The phrase "about this time" would refer to the war, not to the circumstances.

Is it necessary to assume that the marriage with Herodias must have been actualised before John could have improved Antipas? May not the affair have got bruited abroad, and Herod's intention have reached John's ears?

As to the likelihood of the passage being an interpolation, I hardly think that my phrase, "I have my doubts" (as to its genuineness), is exactly rendered by "Abracadabra." He is inclined to think it an interpolation. But its genuineness certainly seems to me to be dubious. For one thing, it interrupts the narrative. Section 3 would have followed on more naturally had it been placed immediately after Section 1. One would have thought that, after such an interregnum as Section 2, Josephus would have commenced Section 3, instead of "So Vitellius prepared to make war," etc., "However, Vitellius prepared to make war," etc. Section 1 concludes with the sentence: "This was the charge that Tiberius gave to the President [Vitellius] of Syria." Then occurs the passage about John the Baptist and the opinion of some of the Jews as to the destruction of Herod's army being due to his putting to death on the part of Antipas. If one of us, in the course of a narrative of facts, should digress in the same manner as does Josephus in this case, he would revert to the main stream of his narrative with some such remark as "However, be that as it may."

Then the style of the passage seems to me to be different from that of Josephus generally. There is a certain sonorous flow about it, unlike the usual choppiness of our Josephus.

Certainly, against these considerations has to be placed the very strong argument of "Abracadabra" that, if it were a Christian interpolation, the writer could hardly have failed to mention the relation of John to Christ and Christianity. But the explanation of this may lie in the vagaries of the Christian consciousness. Possibly the forger was restrained by his knowledge that Josephus was not a Christian, from wording his interpolation in such a way as to involve Josephus in a profession of Christianity. Some day, perhaps, it may be possible to scientifically pigeon-hole the various degrees of artfulness displayed by the Christian liar and forger for the "glory of God." It is worthy of a passing reflection that this passage is not to be found in the *Wars*. There is also a remarkable similarity between this John the Baptist and that Banus who lived in the desert and used no other clothing but what grew upon trees, and had no other food than what grew of its own accord, and bathed himself in cold water frequently," etc., and with whom Josephus himself lived for three years (*Life 3*). The suggestion of

Whiston and others that this Banus was a follower of John the Baptist, and that Josephus imbibed from him notions which afterwards prepared him to have a favorable opinion of Jesus Christ, defeats itself, for Banus would thus have been a follower of Jesus, and not of John, and Josephus, writing long years after this experience with Banus, would have colored his references to him with allusions to Christ and Christianity. How curious that there should have been two Baptists at this period, each living the same ascetic life, drinking and eating nothing but cold water and unboiled beans, and wearing fig leaves to preserve his chastity! And then we find Josephus playing Jesus to this Banus, and, after three years, finding himself unequal to the strain, going back to tailor-made suits and eggs and bacon for breakfast. What if Banus was the prototype of John and those who fixed up the Christian mythology had some astrological reason for altering the name, or possibly finding a myth current about the birth of Christ being heralded by a predecessor of the name of John or Joan, mistook the astronomical significance for an historical one? Is it a fact that in Zodiacal astrology Joan was the name of the sun from the summer to the winter solstice, after which it was called Jesu? And was this Joan called the Baptist because the Nile overflows its banks at the summer solstice? If these are facts, then they may supply the clue to the Gospel myth of John the Baptist. It is curious that John or Janus is the personified genius of January, whose zodiacal sign is Aquarius with his pitcher, and who certainly was the precursor of and the preparer of the way before the Lamb who was born at the vernal equinox in March. All these considerations induce me to have my doubts whether this passage in Josephus is the legitimate offspring of his pen.

B. STEVENS.

A QUESTION OF CHRONOLOGY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Adverting to this question on page 525 of the *Freethinker* for August 17, and to the reply on page 557, August 31, "An Old Subscriber" would feel greatly obliged to "Abracadabra," or other friends, for the names and publishers of a few of the best books, other than Josephus, which would assist in the study of this and kindred subjects.

Is *The Gospel History* the same book as *The Gospel History Critically Examined*? Both have been frequently referred to in the *Freethinker* recently. The valuable contributions of "Abracadabra," and other able writers would be enhanced by quoting the publisher of books to which reference is made in their articles.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.

JOSEPHUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—"Abracadabra," in his last article, "Early Christian Frauds," in writing on the passage in Josephus, and employing the *argumentum ex silentio* as a test of its genuineness, refers to Theophilus as endorsing this silence, and, in so doing, says: "In four of these letters (iii., xx., xxi., xxii.) he quotes, or takes his subject-matter from Josephus, and in two of them he mentions that writer by name." I would ask him (a) in which of these does Theophilus mention (twice) Josephus "by name"; and from which does he (b) "quote or take his subject-matter"?

Might I also ask him, *re* Irenæus, where he mentions Josephus, and "quotes matter from his *Antiquities*?" A reply through the columns of the *Freethinker* would be esteemed.

H. FLETCHER.

A Job for Kitchener.

MR. JOSEPH SYMES, our veteran Freethought colleague at Melbourne, makes the following suggestion in his *Liberator*: "Kitchener has shown himself, both in Egypt and the Soudan, and in South Africa, not only a general, but an administrator of the very best type. Let us hope he may be placed in some post where he may be useful. If they elected him King for ten years, and retired Edward on a pension, it might be good for the Empire. But we have no right to expect so much sense in our contemporaries, for they are enslaved to the old-fashioned bad ways. Why not give Kitchener a ten years' control of Ireland, and let him try to settle the perennial troubles of that country?"

For the distant still thou yearnest,
And behold the good so near!
If to use the good thou learnest,
Thou shalt surely find it here.

—Goethe.

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.): 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Mr. Simmons.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, W. J. Ramsey; 6, W. J. Ramsey.

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

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (West London Branch N. S. S.): 7.30, F. A. Davies.

HYDE PARK, near Marble Arch (West London Branch N. S. S.). Freethought literature on sale at all meetings. 11.30, F. A. Davies.

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

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7 p.m., E. Pack.

STATION ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, G. Green.

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15, C. Cohen.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, G. E. O'Dell, "The Ethical Uses of Imagination."

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (69 York-street): 3.45, A lecture.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Mr. H. B. Samuels, "Is Life Worth Living?"

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): G. W. Foote. 3, "Marie Corelli's Miraculous Masterpiece"; 7, "Earthquakes, Volcanoes, and God."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): H. Percy Ward. 11, "King Edward VII. and His Ancestors; or, The Curse of Royalty"; 3, "The Tyranny of Socialism"; 6.30, "The Jokes of Jehovah." Tea at 5.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, A lecture.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business Meeting.

LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.

H. PERCY WARD, 51 Longside-lane, Bradford.—September 21, Manchester; 28, Sheffield. October 12, Birmingham. November 13 and 14, Liverpool. Debate with Mr. G. H. Bibbings; 16, Liverpool. December 7, Glasgow.

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