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THE Freethinker

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In love of virtue and hatred of vice, in the detestation of cruelty and encouragement of gentleness and mercy, all men who endeavor to be acceptable to their Creator in any way, may freely agree. There are more roads to Heaven, I am inclined to think, than any sect believes; but there can be none which have not these flowers garnishing the way.—CHARLES DICKENS.

The New Fisherman.

“One cannot help reflecting on the surprising fate and revolution of kingdoms, how Rome, once the mistress of the world, the seat of arts, empire, and glory, now lies sunk in sloth, ignorance, and poverty, enslaved to the most cruel as well as to the most contemptible of tyrants, superstition and religious imposture.”—MIDDLETON, *Life of Cicero*.

DR. MIDDLETON, author of the *Life and Letters of Cicero*, and of the still more famous *Free Inquiry*, was a clergyman of the Church of England in the eighteenth century. He was a man of great learning and mental vigor, and it has been thought that much of his spirited exposure of the Early Fathers and the Catholic Church reflects in no small degree on Protestantism and the fundamental beliefs of Christianity. He was also a very elegant writer; and it is to be wished that Christian apologists, if the species *must* continue, would emulate his masculine eloquence.

When the above passage was written by Dr. Middleton the Papacy was in the height of its power and the depth of its degradation. Rome, the city of the Cæsars, was ruled from the Vatican, and was as corrupt in morals as it was contemptible in civilisation. According to the universal testimony of travellers, the seat of the Temporal Power of the Holy Catholic Church was more full of idlers, beggars, thieves, and prostitutes—to say nothing of quite indescribable priests—than any other city in Europe. Vice and barbarism were most rampant at the very heart of Christendom. The nearer the Pope the nearer the Devil.

Very little improvement occurred until Rome became the metropolis of United Italy. Since 1870, when French bayonets ceased to prop up the Pope's Temporal Power, and the Italian army marched into the Holy City, Rome has gradually risen from her orthodox grave, and has now taken her place amongst the capitals of the civilised world.

It is impossible, however—at least it is scarcely conceivable—that modern Rome should renew her ancient grandeur. Can there ever be a Roman Empire again? And was it not as the centre of that vast organisation that the imperial city supported its magnificence? Does the Roman breed any longer exist? Has not the “strain” been fatally impaired by so many centuries of political and religious serfdom? Can we expect a parallel to the grand movement of tolerant, secular power which makes itself felt even amidst the miracles and religiosities of the New Testament? Are we likely to behold uncrowned kings of the type of the great Pagan Emperors, who seem almost to belong to another and a nobler species of humanity? Take, for instance, the following portrait of Trajan from the pen of the historian Dion:—

“When he mounted the throne he was strong in body, he was vigorous in mind: age had impaired none of his

faculties; he was altogether free from envy and detraction; he honored all the good and he advanced them; and on this account they could not be the objects of his fear, or of his hate; he never listened to informers; he gave not way to his anger; he abstained equally from unfair exactions and unjust punishments; he had rather be loved as a man than honored as a sovereign; he was affable with his people, respectful to the senate, and universally beloved by both; he inspired none with dread but the enemies of his country.”

What a portrait! Has the Christian world ever produced its equal?

What a descent from a Trajan to a Pope Leo or a Pope Pius! What a difference between the majestic embodiment of civilisation and the tawdry incarnation of credulity and imposture! The representative of humanity is as superior to the representative of religion as a lion is superior to a jackal, or an eagle to a cuckoo.

This may be said without unfairness or unkindness to any old man who occupies the Vatican and affects to represent God Almighty. Such a function is simply grotesque. Reason can only regard it with contempt or disgust. Either the Pope is himself a victim of the most preposterous superstition, or he is the head of a huge conspiracy against the intelligence, the dignity, and the welfare of mankind; unless, indeed, he is a mixture of both, and is half madman and half charlatan.

There is said to have been a look of benevolence on the face of Pope Leo XIII. Perhaps so; but, if his portraits were at all accurate, there was also a look of cunning. The Jesuit vied in his countenance with the Servant of the Servants of God.

Papa Pecci has gone to glory. He fought hard, with the assistance of his doctors, to keep out of it, in spite of his ninety-four years. But he had to go. His time had come. The talked-of miracle was not wrought to extend his longevity beyond the bounds of nature. He is as dead as those who died thousands of years ago. And as a dead lord ranks with commoners, so a dead Pope ranks with simple Christians. He is but one of the great majority; past praise, as past blame—for who will pour flattery into the dull cold ear of death?

The Pope is dead: long live the Pope! A new fisherman sits in the seat of St. Peter. A new religious juggler holds the Keys of Heaven and Hell. The old business goes on as before.

A Bank of England note does not change its value because the Bank has a new Cashier. The name is altered on the “flimsy,” but it makes no difference to the “fiver.” And the going of this Pope, or the coming of that Pope, makes no difference to the Holy Catholic Church. It is a colossal organisation, a great historic system, and the power of the Pope is more nominal than real. He is controlled by the Government behind the scenes as effectually as the Czar is controlled by the leading agents of the great Russian despotism. Were a real man to arise, with a will of his own, he would shatter the Papacy—unless he were poisoned. The Church is governed by the Cardinals; and behind them are the dead men, who made the Church what it is, and thus rule it (so to speak) from their tombs.

Papa Sarto is as much a figure-head as Papa Pecci. Newspapers talk in their silly way about his being a man of the people—plain Joseph Taylor by name—

and with the heart of a peasant in his bosom. Some of them even talk about the great things he may do in a democratic direction. But this is all the veriest absurdity. He will not, he cannot, do anything of the kind. A powerful Cardinal—a man of brains and energy—hardly ever wins the Papal tiara. When the election of a new Pope takes place he is opposed by another powerful Cardinal. Opposite factions will never join hands over one leader or the other; they will only coalesce over a third, indifferent, colorless candidate, who only unites them by not dividing them. Such a candidate was Pope Pius X.

The directors of the Holy Catholic Church are scattered over the globe, but they are most numerous in Italy, and the managing director is nearly always an Italian. This arrangement, indeed, is almost inevitable; for, next to the great Christian fable, the chief asset of the business is the magic of the name of Rome. No other centre is possible to the Company. The truth is, as Hobbes declared in a fine bold image, that the Roman Catholic Church is the ghost of the dead Roman Empire, sitting throned and crowned upon its grave.

Joseph Taylor, alias Pius X., is the new managing director of this great and going concern. Such he is ostensibly, at least; though far less so in fact than is generally supposed; being hemmed in, as we have already said, by the traditions and continuous policy of his office. There is a new Fisherman, we may say, in the chair of Simon Peter. But there will be no change in the fishing. The Catholic Church cannot change. Its dogmas are the logical development of Christian ideas, and they are cemented by the final dogma of infallibility. Moreover, the Church is the perfection of organisation. It cannot be improved, any more than its dogmas can be altered. Whether it sink or swim, it will remain the same. And it is this Church, which is Christianity, that Freethought has to fight and conquer.

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion in Snippets.

OUR lives are governed by accidents. I use this expression in a Pickwickian sense, and without committing myself to anything objectionable; but it was a mere accident that found me, something about one hundred miles from London, with a recent issue of the *Sun* newspaper in my travelling library. To be quite frank, the said number of the *Sun* was picked up hurriedly, to enfold various other papers, and it is this circumstance that has led to my refreshing my soul with the religious musings of Mr. John Lobb, which form one of the weekly features of the paper aforementioned.

Many of the London papers have of late thought it advisable (and have, I presume, found it profitable) to devote a portion of their space to the chronicling of religious news; but none of them serve it up in quite the same manner as Mr. Lobb in the *Sun*. Most of them confine their information to reports of Church meetings, with appointments made to the various pulpits, and accounts of the business side of religious organisations. Some publish one or two sermons weekly (an "a" might justly be substituted for one of the "e"'s in the last word), and others give us a column of exhortations on Saturday that are calculated to secure the necessary sense of depression for the religious observation of Sunday.

Mr. Lobb's method is alien to all of these. His two columns are entitled "A Look Around the Churches," and the title evidently has suggested to the writer the necessity of looking around the subject. The result is a truly wonderful mixture of paragraphs on Church government, marriages and deaths of preachers, with inane reflections of life in general—of course from the religious point. So that, in the midst of a couple of paragraphs reporting

that a certain reverend gentleman is booked to preach at two churches during the coming week, one is pointedly reminded that Christianity is a religion of suffering, and to shrink from a duty which involves pain is downright infidelity. This ought at least to bring any potential backsliders from the preacher's meetings up to the scratch. Or, following an announcement of the scarcity of curates in the Church of England, comes a paragraph reminding us that the inflictions of Providence are usually blessings in disguise. Whether the reflections are there in order to induce people to read the news paragraphs or *vice versa* is a question that Mr. Lobb alone can answer.

The sample of Lobbian religion I have before me starts off with the striking announcement, "We must die alone." On the score of both truth and brevity this statement is unimpeachable. But Mr. Lobb does not stop there. Having gained our assent by direct assault, as it were, he qualifies our admiration for the brevity of the sentence by the reflection that when "one long wave from the sea of eternity" sweeps us from the shore, "in that untried and utter solitude there is the pulsation of that assurance 'I am not alone, because the Father is with me.'" So that we do not die alone after all, and the end of Mr. Lobb's first reflection quite destroys the value of the beginning.

Probably as a slight relief from the philosophic weight of the opening paragraph, Mr. Lobb next gives us a speculation on the most likely successor to Pope Leo XIII., and then with some subtle association of the Dark Ages, the Catholic Church, and the decadence of civilisation, launches out as follows:—

"Let the Dark Ages come, let society and religious indifference roll backward, let spurious piety dishonor God, and the churches go down and perish, Christ and His all-quickening life remains and will remain to the end of time. Since he left the air is charged with heavenly odors, and a kind of celestial consciousness, a sense of other worlds is waited on us in its breath. It were easier to untwist all the beams of light in the sky than to get the character of Jesus, which is the real gospel, out of the world."

Now this is what may, without exaggeration, be called "going strong," so strong that our new Thomas à Kempis has quite overdone it. Mr. Lobb is so certain as to the value of the character of Jesus that one would hardly dare to controvert his opinion. But, all the same, the paragraph seems a bit mixed. Mr. Lobb suggests, in the opening sentence, some connection between the approach of the Dark Ages and the decline of religious indifference. Now I, of course, believe that nothing would contribute more effectively to that end than the decline of religious indifference. But I hardly think Mr. Lobb means this. His oratorical fervor was evidently too strong for him; and, like the excited speaker who said, "I go one step further"—and fell among the audience, in taking a step further in his declamatory exercise, he has quite overshot the mark.

I am not quite clear about the "heavenly odors" left by Jesus, my recollections of certain religious meetings I have attended are certainly "odoros," and while these may have been of the "heavenly" order, they were far from commanding my admiration. But the suggestion that we *smell* the next world is decidedly original, although a trifle suggestive of a too long delayed funeral. I have heard of people thinking, seeing, and feeling, and hearing the next world. Mr. Lobb is the first I have ever met who suggested that we could smell it. Probably he despised being anything but original, and the other four senses had already been utilised.

I am again puzzled to see the connection between the beginning and the end of reflection number two. Mr. Lobb says the influence of Jesus can never be destroyed; his quickening influence will remain to the end of time. I rather fancy I *have* read this before, but at least one can understand it. But if the Dark Ages do come; if spurious piety dishonors God, and the churches go down—or up—and perish, and

if civilisation generally goes to the dogs or the devil, what becomes of the "all-quickening" influence of Jesus? How much is it worth? Or if this influence remains and is worth anything, how on earth can we get the dark ages, break up the churches, or dishonor God? Mr. Lobb really ought to issue some sort of a chart with his sermonettes.

Following this outburst on the Dark Ages and the smell of the next world comes a paragraph on the death of Matilda Sturge, which, not knowing anything of the lady, I pass without interest, and am brought up at last by the following:

"The Sanctuary stands related to society as the ocean to the land. As the sea is the storehouse of the clouds, so the public worship of God is the source of a nation's moralities.....Let the worship of Almighty God cease in the sanctuary, and ere long society would become a moral Sahara, a spiritual waste."

The chief regret I feel on reading this is that the character for original reflections acquired by the suggestion that we smell the next world, should be thus thrown away. For I have certainly seen this kind of thing elsewhere, and on more than one occasion. In all probability half the parsons in Great Britain will be saying this on Sunday, and the remaining half the Sunday after. The only curious thing about the utterance is that it is often accompanied by the caution that the worship of God in other people's sanctuaries is a source of national immoralities rather than the reverse. Mr. Lobb has certainly the advantage of catholicity. Any sanctuary seems to suit, Christian, Jewish, or Mohammedan, although his statement concerning Jesus and the odour he left behind him, would lead one to suppose that he has a preference for a particular kind of sanctuary after all.

I am rather puzzled likewise to discover in what way the sanctuary serves as a "great reservoir of spiritual and moral forces," and provides us with the supplies that "flow down through our homes and hearts." As it stands, it would seem that Mr. Lobb is of opinion that our moralities are wholly dependent upon the Christian sanctuary, and took their origin from that institution. And, with all due respect to that gentleman's philosophic profundity, I would venture to suggest that this is not quite the case. There is, indeed, some small reason for believing that, even before people had caught the smell of the next world through the death of Jesus, "our moralities" were not quite unknown. There were ideas of truthfulness before Christian preachers perambulated Europe; and the citizens of old Rome had some little notion of civic independence and freedom long before the advent of Dr. Clifford and the Nonconformist Conscience. And one can even find "moralities" among those members of our modern civilisation who do not go to the sanctuary for inspiration, and, so far as can be seen, are none the worse for their abstention. It is hard to believe that Mr. Lobb has any desire to be impertinent or otherwise offensive; religious writers are notoriously careful of their opponents' feelings, and so painfully desirous of not overstepping the bounds of strict accuracy. Yet I *might* point out that this assumption of moral superiority by the Christian is apt to be sickening, and to incite a little caustic comment from critics.

Not that I would hold, as against Mr. Lobb's implied claim that morality began with Christianity, that Christianity created our immoralities. Far from it. I believe that even our immoralities are very ancient. There were liars in the ancient world before the advent of Church historians or anti-infidel speakers. There were people who cast envious eyes and stretched out greedy hands upon other people's possessions before the era of Imperial expansion and Missionary Societies. Truth to tell, the ancient world lied and robbed and murdered as well as any modern civilised Christian country; and, although this may come as a surprise to Mr. Lobb, I can assure him that a little study of the subject will convince him that this is the sober truth.

There is only one thing I am in doubt as to whether it is wholly modern or not. This is religious journalism. In ancient times the religious teacher or prophet went out into the highways and byways and yelled out his message. Sometimes the people threw half-bricks at him, sometimes they hung him on a "sour apple tree," and sometimes he found himself in clover and received the contributions of those people who were impressed by his antics. But I do not recollect anything of the nature of religious journalism in the ancient world. This seems wholly a modern institution. It is probably not unconnected with the scarcity of parsons. It used to be said that the pulpit was the refuge for the fool of the family. Of late the Bishops are complaining that there is a shortage of even these. It is just probable that the recent development of religious journalism is proving a serious rival for the patronage of this particular class.

C. COHEN.

From Christian Pulpit to Secular Platform.

BY RICHARD TREVOR.

VII.—THE INTELLECT IN BONDS.

DOGMAIC theology no longer wielded its bewildering fascination over me, but was scornfully trampled under my feet. With those who regarded precision and definiteness of thought in religion as of supreme importance I was completely out of touch. Like Dr. Bushnell, I was firmly of the opinion that an adequate dogmatic theology cannot exist, because spiritual facts can only be expressed in approximative and poetical language. This was also the contention so cleverly defended by Matthew Arnold in his epoch-making book, entitled *Literature and Dogma*. His central proposition is that Bible terms, like *grace*, *new birth*, *justification*, are not to be "taken in a fixed and rigid manner, as if they were symbols with as definite and fully-grasped a meaning as the names *line* or *angle*, but in a fluid and passing way, as men use terms in common discourse, or in eloquence and poetry, to describe approximately, but only approximately, what they have present before their mind, but do not profess that their mind does, or can, grasp exactly or adequately." Such teaching suited my mood to perfection, and with riotous joy I revelled in the two sparkling gems, *Literature and Dogma* and *St. Paul and Protestantism*. In these books Matthew Arnold goes so far as to formally reject the Supernatural and the Miraculous. "God," he says, "is used in most cases as by no means a term of science or exact knowledge, but a term of poetry and eloquence—a term *thrown out*, so to speak, at a not fully-grasped object of the speaker's consciousness; a literary term, in short; and mankind mean different things by it as their consciousness differs." This idea was a key that opened most of the locks of the Bible, and I used it continually with great profit. But I had not the courage to mention Arnold's name, or even Bushnell's, in any of my public pronouncements, because in deeply-religious circles both were highly suspected and execrated names.

In this way it became fashionable to decry the intellect as an inferior faculty, a calculating machine, a logic-grinder, which deals alone with mundane and temporal realities, but cannot even touch the higher things of the spirit. It is doubtless extremely useful to the scientist, or the low-grade philosopher; but to the preacher it has no real value. Of course, this position was tenable only to those who believed in the existence and possible activity, within the human soul, of a superior faculty, "a subjective faculty," as Max Müller calls it, "for the apprehension of the infinite." In his *Hibbert Lectures* the same scholar describes it more fully as "a mental faculty which, independent of, nay in spite of, sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the infinite under different names and under varying disguises." This faculty is intuitive, inborn, and belongs to all alike, at least potentially. It is the gift of insight, vision, and realisation. Now, my

contention was that by the exercise of this spiritual organ we could clearly see God and Christ, realise the spiritual world and immortality, and become blessedly assured of our salvation through the risen and ascended Lord. Vision, it seemed to me, was infinitely nobler and more ennobling than ordinary knowledge. Many of my comrades in the new school used to wax irresistibly eloquent in praise and commendation of this inward eye. To the intellect God was unknowable and inconceivable; but through the soul's eye and to the heart's need he was most gloriously and savingly visible.

At this time I had the unspeakable privilege of an introduction to six luminous and illuminating poets, namely, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Browning, and Tennyson, all of whom confirmed and advanced my theological liberalism. It was to Browning, perhaps, that I was most deeply indebted, and I habitually quoted him in my sermons. How shocked I was when I discovered that Mrs. Sutherland Orr and others were impertinent enough to claim him as an Agnostic. Among prose-writers my chief instructors were Emerson, Carlyle, and Ruskin. Of theologians, the most inspiring by far was Dr. George Matheson, the poet-preacher of Scotland, whose able book, *Can the Old Faith live with the New?* gave me a firmer grip of what people call the fundamental verities of the Gospel than all other books put together. He made a magnificent use of the intellect in the vilification of itself. The maligned faculty glowed and sparkled, in the most charming manner, as it sang the praises of its rival and so-called supplanter.

What makes me dwell so long on this point is the knowledge that there are thousands of clergymen among us at present, who loudly glory in their alleged possession and enjoyment of the spiritual faculty. They say: "We cannot prove the existence of God on merely intellectual lines; but we know that he is because our inward eye sees him." "We cannot prove the Divinity of Jesus Christ in any outward, formal way; but to us his Divinity is an irresistible inference from what we have seen and experienced of his saving grace. Not long ago, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, the oracle of the City Temple, stated that he has no fear of the Higher Critics. "Even if they were to succeed in destroying the authority of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation," he said, "yet my own experience of its gracious efficacy would enable me to cling to Christianity as confidently and tenaciously as ever." On another occasion he said: "Our faith in Christianity is dependent, not on the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, but on our direct vision and knowledge of Christ." I am not at all surprised at his making such an assertion, because I often made it myself; but it is an impotent attitude, and dates no further back than the birth of the Higher Criticism. Fifty years ago it was well-nigh the universal teaching of the Pulpit that no one could be a Christian without believing in the full inspiration of the Scriptures; and even at present there are a few, such as Dr. Robertson Nicoll, who declare that if the Bible were discredited on critical grounds, Christianity would have to be given up. The truth, undoubtedly, is that the advanced theologians of the present day are standing on the brink of the chasm of scepticism, because, in the absence of an infallible Book, which claims to be a direct revelation from God, Supernatural Religion must speedily collapse. In his *Literature and Dogma*, Matthew Arnold's main object was to make it possible for educated people who rejected the miraculous still to believe in the Bible and Christianity. What he said, in effect, was this: "Miracles do not happen, the belief in the personality of God is groundless, and the hope of immortality is illusive; but, on the whole, the Bible's chief concern is with conduct, which is three-fourths of human life, and, on this account, the Bible should be retained, and we can still call ourselves Christians." But, for once, one of the finest of literary critics was utterly mistaken. D'vest Christianity of its miraculous element, and

what will there be left that is not common to all great religions? Banish the Supernatural from the Bible, and what will it contain worth preserving? Indeed, I am convinced that Arnold's argument inevitably leads to Atheism, not to the recovery of faith. I am prepared to go one step further and affirm that, at heart, the great apostle of culture was himself a genuine Atheist. The God in whom he believed was only a projection or externalisation of himself. In proof of this assertion I need give only the following characteristic quotation: "Bishop Wilson says, 'Look up to God (by which he means just this, consult your conscience) at all times, and you will, as in a glass, discover what is fit to be done.'" To a certainty we know that Bishop Wilson meant just exactly what he said; but to Matthew Arnold God and conscience, or God and himself, were convertible terms.

It took me many years, however, to perceive how utterly unsound and illogical the position I occupied really was, and how inevitable would be the alternative between a return to the simple, blind, unreasoning, but strong faith of my childhood, and an advance to open and unadulterated Atheism. There is no safe and permanent half-way house between emphatic, unequivocal, and old-fashioned Supernaturalism and plain, unadorned Secularism. Mr. Campbell, though by no means an orator, is yet a most magnetic speaker, and will always have a large following of non-thinkers; but I am certain that his theological attitude and style of reasoning, if reasoning it can be called, are calculated, in the long run, to make more infidels than believers. Without one definite seat of authority, to which to refer all debatable points, religion cannot survive. During the Middle Ages it was the Church that settled all disputes. All its official findings were infallible and universally binding. The Reformation shifted the seat of authority from the Church to the Bible; and for many generations Protestants worshipped the Book with as complete a homage as Catholics did the Pope. The Protestant Reformation did nothing more than exchange one seat of authority for another. But in our day the only authoritative voice, acknowledged by the leaders of British Free Churchism, is that of individual experience; and the people who decline to listen to, and follow, it, are declared to be destitute of the spiritual organ. Every preacher is now an infallible pope in his own society. The result is that we have a million popes instead of one; and it is a very significant fact that no two of them agree on a single subject. Each has a different kind of spiritual faculty from all the others; and the consequence is that all of them deliver different and conflicting spiritual judgments. The intellect is in bonds, but this very multiplicity of contradictory voices is a sure sign that the day of its glorious emancipation is hastening on. The Church is slowly committing suicide at the instigation of its own rulers, and the time is not far off when its tomb will be adorned with green grass and lovely flowers. This is a prophecy which is already in the process of fulfilment, as every careful student of the signs of the times is bound to admit.

Pentecost on Immortality.

(Concluded from page 486.)

There is many a man whose theology is determined by his liver, and man's whole view of life is often changed by taking a dose of pills. You know perfectly well that when you are mentally depressed you at once begin to think what is the matter with your body that depresses you. There is a disease which we call nervous prostration, which is a horrible trouble with the mind. This is prostration of the soul, and if the body can be built up the prostration ceases. There are some who hold that the other way is true. The mind healers, faith healers, etc., say, "Cure your mind and you will cure your

body. If you have a high fever, if the condition is such that there is a rearrangement of the atoms of the body, you are delirious, you have lost your consciousness, you have no sense. And there are diseases that produce insanity—that is, a permanent loss of intelligence, or disarrangement of the soul. Of course, these are things that there can be no dispute about; anybody who would dispute them would be insane. For example, across the river at some town over in Jersey there was a man who was blasting, and he was a good, industrious working-man, a kind husband and father, a good provider for his family, and a thoroughly respectable citizen. While arranging a blast a crowbar in some way was thrust entirely through his head, passing upward from the chin. The man recovered, but his character changed. He became brutal in his family, dishonest, and a different kind of a man. That change in his character, in his soul, was produced by a physical wound.

And there is on record an instance of a boy who was a liar, a thief—what we call a degenerate; and a surgical operation was performed upon him. It was found that there was a slight bone pressure on the brain inside the skull. That bone pressure was removed, and his character changed at once, and he ceased to be a liar, a thief, and a degenerate. That is, he got a different soul because a little piece of bone was taken off of his brain. Those, of course, are facts, and they are facts which indicate the vital relation between the soul and the body. They are facts which tend to show that the soul is as much subject to evolution as is the body. And all the indications are that when the body dies—as we say, when the body disintegrates—the soul does the same thing. When the body dies, the soul dies. If the body becomes dissipated into the mass of matter, the indications are that the soul does the same thing, and that is the belief of many millions of people on earth.

Now, as to the resurrection of the dead, I think it hardly worth while to spend a moment on that subject. Any person who believes that when the body dies, a very large portion of it being composed of water which evaporates, and the solid particles of the body return to the earth—anybody who believes that the same identical body can be picked up out of the grave when an angel blows a trumpet, can believe anything. His belief goes back to the fathers of the Church, who said, "I believe it because it is impossible." And as for the temporary residence of soul in heaven or hell or purgatory, separate from its body, such a belief as that is untenable. It may be true, but it is untenable. We cannot think of a soul without a body, or of anything without a body. Anyone who says that a person died, his body lies there and his soul went to heaven, has a difficult task on his hands to tell in what state the soul went to heaven. Millions of people believe these things because they never think on them at all. Why should they, when they are taught it is a sin to think?

Now, any argument that you wish to make about the immortality of the human soul is just as applicable to the animal or the vegetable soul. The difference is only in degree and not in kind. If, when you die and your body disintegrates, you hold that your soul takes flight, then you must admit that the soul of your dog goes along with you, and you should not separate yourself from the lily of the valley. If we are immortal, then everything is immortal in the same way, from the jelly-fish to the man of genius. The difference between the highest man and the lowest man is much greater than the difference between the highest animal and the lowest man. Pigmies from South Africa were taken to Italy and could not be taught or developed beyond the stage of a ten-year-old child. And Shakespeare is much more different from one of these same people than they are from an ape. Why, then, should we say that this pigmy is immortal and the ape, so much like him, is not immortal? Why should they be separated in that respect?

So far as evidence goes, as I have stated, it is all

indicative of the cessation of ourselves at the moment of death. That is to say, man is not immortal. I mean to say the evidence is that when a man is dead he is unconscious. Nothing is physically destroyed, but consciousness comes to an end, and if consciousness comes to an end, that is annihilation. What I am saying is that science seems to indicate that at the end of this physical body there comes a break between this life we are now living and some other life. Nature apparently cares nothing for the individual. She cares for the type. She cares only for man, the genus *homo*. And Nature cares to preserve the type only so long as the type is useful, and the records show that many types have gone just as soon as Nature had no more use for the types.

And yet, it is very difficult for us to believe that that is so. Intellectually, looking at the cold, scientific evidence, the mind is forced to the conviction that death ends all, and yet we do not give it up, because there is something that even science teaches us is true. There is something about us that is not exactly like the body. The body is a material thing, and can be carefully weighed. Everything that adds to or takes from the body can be weighed, and nothing is lost; it can all be accounted for. But there is something about our bodies that cannot be weighed. We feel that there is something in here that is ourselves, something that is myself, and many of us are in that stage of development that it would be pleasant for us to have that personality continued until we are ready to give it up, and we still have a haunting feeling that when the body dies we shall still be here and possess memory, or something of that sort.

After I left the Church I went to the other extreme and became a somewhat dismal Materialist—a Materialist in a somewhat different sense from what I am to-day. The first thought that gave me a modified view was at one of Anton Seidl's concerts. When the music got me and lifted me up the thought came to me that it was impossible that the man who composed that piece of music was only a piece of mud or matter. The feeling came upon me that the magnificent soul that produced that music could never perish. That does not prove anything; yet there was that feeling. And when I come to think of myself I cannot think of myself as being dead. Can you? It seems to me as if I must persist and know what happens. I do not pretend to be a genius nor to have a truly great soul like some that Nature has produced, but it seems to me as if there must be something more to me than what could be snuffed out by a policeman's club on the head or something like that. A Frenchman once replied in conversation, "Perhaps you are not immortal, but I am." There is that feeling.

Up to this present time we cannot get rid of the idea that man is immortal. To-day I have been trying to give you facts. Scientific men keep working at the subject. I have been reading one of their books. They are saying that not all men are immortal, but that some are immortal; that by a man's goodness and genius it is possible for him to create within his body an etheric soul. The chapter on ether in Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* is one of the most intensely interesting dissertations in the literature of the world. Ether is the substance that carries the Marconi message; it is the substance on which light and heat travel, and which makes possible the X-ray. I believe Haeckel says if all of the ether in the universe were pressed to a solid form it would weigh something like two hundred and fifty pounds. This is a mere fancy, a mere dream; but the fact that scientific men are driven to such statements as that shows with what tenacity the subject of immortality clings to the human mind. Those who argue that there is not time in the course of a human life to develop this immortal soul are told that it may have been transmitted to the infant by heredity.

There is this hope: We know that the mind need no longer be distressed by a fear of hell. After you get the thought of hell out of your mind it does not

make any difference whether the doctrine of immortality is true or not. There is this inspiration, that if it is true that a man makes his own immortality by his own goodness, by his own greatness, or by the development of his mind, by his psychic nature, then there is that encouragement, that if we want immortality we must win it ourselves.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Poet and the World; or, The Eternal Recompense.

BEING A FREE RENDERING OF SCHILLER'S "VISION OF THE EARTH."

Jove one day gave, in generous mood,
The earth unto our mortal brood:
"Take it, and in fraternal love
Share it among you," said old Jove.

Up in a twinkling, up and out,
The earth-born bodies swarmed about.
The churl went reaping the boon land;
The squire, he claimed the forest grand;

The merchant over waste and main
Carried the gold, the silk, the grain;
And king and priest, in robe and stole,
Of plain wayfarers dock'd the toll.

The Bishop prayed, "God save the King!"
And—"Loyal brethren, let us sing!"
The royal rogue filled high his jug:
"We drink to the Right Reverend Smug."

After the plunder and the heat,
When the division was complete,
The simple poet came along,
Piping some old, forgotten song.

Nothing was left. On either hand
He saw the fat possessors stand,
Dull-ear'd, and tardy to repay
A bard for his divinest lay.

"Ah, Jove!" he cried; "is this my lot?
Am I of all alone forgot?
Here, everything is taken up,
And I have neither plate nor cup."

Then Jove: "Then wert thou sleeping, sir,
When all the world else was astir,
Earth and her yield dividing out?
Singer of songs, what wert about?"

"Was with my heart, Jove, in the skies:
For, oh! the Spherical harmonies
Were in my ears; my eyes, in love,
Were on thy countenance, oh Jove!"

Then Jove: "How can I pay thy ryme?
The rats seize all. But, spirit sublime,
Skyward, up from the earth-brood, wing!
They grub and hoard. Soar thou, and sing!"

II. BARBER.

CAUSE OF THE FALL: BRAINS.—The gentleman who had taken the poetess into dinner, and who prided himself on knowing as much as a doctor about food-stuffs, declared that apples were excellent for the vitality of the brain because of the phosphoric acid which they contain in large quantities. "Oh, then it is quite clear," said the poetess, "that Eve only plucked the apple to supply Adam with a few ideas!"

PARSON JOHNSON: "Ah wish de mudders ob dis congregation would bring dey babies to church wif dem. Novah mind how young dey am, jess bring 'em erlong. If dey am too young to appreciate de significance ob de service, dey can at least yell an' keep de deacons awake!"

ANXIOUS TO PLEASE.—"Is there no balm in Gilead?" cried the preacher. The chemist in the front pew moved uneasily, and rubbed his eyes. "All out of it at present," he murmured, gently, "but I can give you something just as good." Afterward he slept more peacefully.

"MY LORD, BRING ME FRIED FISH."—The novel sight of an earl serving hot fried fish and chip potatoes was seen at the supper of a church institute at Yarmouth, at which the vicar of Great Yarmouth, the Rev. Francis Godolphin, Earl of Chichester, presided.

Acid Drops.

The new Pope's name, in English, is Joseph Taylor. Were we to imitate the manners of the majority of Christians in speaking of Thomas Paine, we should call him Joe Taylor. Anyhow, it is not a very distinguished name for God's earthly vicegerent.

Pope Pius the Tenth—for this is the name that Joseph Taylor has assumed—is reported to be nobody in particular, and we can easily believe it. Popes are seldom really distinguished men. When a new "Servant of the Servants of God" has to be elected, it is generally found that the prominent candidates extinguish each other. Neither commands a sufficient majority, and sooner than support each other they concentrate their votes on an outsider; so that the man who gets the post is one who has few friends—and few enemies. In other words, he is the nominee who divides the Council of Cardinals the least. On his own individual merits he might receive a couple of votes; as an instrument for keeping out influential candidates he secures a two-thirds majority. In the ordinary course of things, therefore, it would be absurd to expect very much of Joseph Taylor.

The new Pope receives a number of articles by right of his office; such as the Fisherman's Ring, the Triple Cross, the Triple Crown, and last, but not least, the Keys of Heaven and Hell. God Almighty is practically superannuated; it is the Pope who commands the doors of the two Eternal Establishments. For it must be remembered that Purgatory is but a temporary affair.

When the Pope is crowned he is offered bread and wine. Three breads on a paten are brought to him by the sacristan. He selects one, and the sacristan has to eat the other two. Similarly, the sacristan has to drink the remainder of the wine, after the Pope has poured a little into his own Chalice. These precautions are taken to prevent His Holiness from being poisoned by some disappointed rival. What a satire on the whole business!

The clerical *La Croix* is jubilant over the new Pope. "We feel a thrill of joy," it says, "like the shepherds certainly felt on learning the birth of the Savior." Good old Joseph Taylor! What a time he's having! But the *Croix* need not be quite so blasphemous.

What possesses Protestants to lie for the Church of Rome? There is a certain class of undecided Protestants who have absolutely a mania for putting about taradiddles in support of the Roman quasi-Christian conspiracy, which even "the Great Lying Church" itself refrains from doing. Here we have the *Times* telling the world in regard to the election of a Pope: "There is no activity of competition among the Cardinals themselves, no open formation of parties, no apparent canvassing of votes. The Princes of the Roman Church go their way in serene unconsciousness of a world which is busied in disposing of their votes."

Now, this is sufficiently idiotic, on the face of it; but we remember that, in the authorised Life of the late Pope, there is given a full account of the canvassing in the Conclave, with the actual conversations, and the retort on a Cardinal who was running a rival to him on the ground that his protégé was "a saint," that—"If he is a saint he will pray for us; but Cardinal Pecci has been an ambassador, and knows the world, and will defend us."

So far from this nonsense of the *Times*, "that there is no open formation of parties in Conclaves," being true, after the last Conclave there was reported in the papers a scene in the corridor where the cardinals take exercise, in which Cardinal Howard—the uncle of the present Duke of Norfolk—a priest who was an ex-Lifeguardman, attacked Cardinal Manning, swore at him as a damned something-or-other, and threatened him with violence. Doubtless, like all mystery-men, the cardinals would wish to be regarded with awe, as sly and artful, but in actual fact they are just about as astute as they are holy.

Accrington Town Council is up in arms against the rejection of a pupil teacher at a Church on the ground that she was a Unitarian. Miss Crofts, the teacher in question, was admittedly well qualified in all other respects, but it was held that she could not possibly teach Church doctrine including the Trinity. We should imagine this was clear enough. How can the doctrine of the Trinity be taught by a Unitarian? And what is the use of the Accrington Town Council protesting against theological tests? The Nonconformist Councillors ought to be ashamed of themselves.

They ought to have the sense to see that there must be tests on every subject taught. The only way to get rid of the tests is to get rid of religious teaching. If the Nonconformists will join in bringing about this desirable consummation they will gain our applause. But anything short of it is mental and moral confusion.

The lady in this case is a Unitarian. It is probable, however, that she still calls herself a Christian; and that magic word may have weighed with the Nonconformist Councillors. Had she been an Atheist or Agnostic, we dare say they would have let her slide.

Rev. Dr. Aked, of Liverpool, who has long been fighting his lung trouble in Switzerland, seems to be aspiring to another form of fighting. Writing to his congregation, he wishes he was by the side of Dr. Clifford and other Nonconformist leaders in the Passive Resistance struggle. "Some of us," he adds, "would soon have enough of passive resistance. And I, for one, have always held and taught the Divine Right of rebellion!" Now the Divine Right of rebellion means the Divine Right of knocking the other fellow on the head. It is an odd aspiration for a professional disciple of the teacher who said "Resist not evil" and "If one smite thee on the one cheek, turn unto him the other also." But there was always a wide difference between what Christians profess and what they actually believe. So the Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour had better look out for himself when the Rev. Dr. Aked comes home again and raises his rebel standard.

Some of these Passive Resisters have queer notions of what is proper in a court of justice. At Birmingham the other day a leading Passive Resister's "pals" clapped their hands vigorously when his case was called and he stepped to the front. The stipendiary magistrate threatened to have the court cleared if such manifestations were continued. Presently, however, when the case of the Rev. Thomas Morris Gwynne Owen was called, there was a great outburst of applause; and the stipendiary asked a Mr. Woosman, sitting in the body of the court, "Why did you clap, sir?" "I shall clap if I desire; you will find out presently," was this man's impudent reply. Probably this friend of the new Nonconformist Martyrs thought he had a right to do anything he pleased in the name of religion. We hope such rowdies will be taught a lesson before long. Meanwhile we suggest the following reflection to ordinary folk: If these Nonconformist agitators act in this way in the body of the court, how would they act if they sat upon the bench?

Mr. Whitaker Wright is reported to have said that he wishes he were as sure of Heaven as he is of clearing his character. Mr. Wright's character is a subject on which we have neither the right nor the wish to speak at present. We may confess to a belief, however, that his yearning for Heaven is not very intense. When these unhappy events are over he would probably rather go on inhabiting a certain spot in England which he built and fitted up regardless of expense. Men have been known to fly from Hell, but no one was ever seen hurrying to Heaven.

The Hastings "Mystery" has been discussed in the *Daily News*. It appears that the number of visitors to Hastings has greatly decreased, and the question is what is the explanation? No doubt the South Eastern Railway Company is much to blame. The distance from Charing Cross is 62 miles, and once a day, we believe, it is covered in two hours. Other "express" trains take two hours and a half and longer; which is at the rate of something like 20 miles an hour from Charing Cross to Hastings—and is positively facetious. We take it to be one of the South Eastern's best jokes; and it has a pretty good reputation in that line. Still, as Mr. L. Hollingshead points out, the Town authorities have something to answer for. They do their best, or worst, to make Hastings unattractive to "week-enders." The principal excitement on Sunday is the Salvation Army. Both the East and West Hill lifts are closed "by order," the "buses do not run, and there is no band. "The poor visitor is made to feel," Mr. Hollingshead says, "that he is not there to enjoy himself." Hastings Town Councillors should wake up, and cease imposing their antiquated Sabbatarianism upon the visitors.

Sunday in Yarmouth is very different from Sunday in Hastings. According to the *Yarmouth Parish Magazine*, edited by the Vicar, the Rev. the Earl of Chichester, things have come to a terrible pass there, from an orthodox point of view. "With the approval of the Corporation," he says, "we are surpassing the Continental Sundays in noise and excitement. Then we have not that which most Continental places have, the early attendance at church before the pleasures of the day begin. It is a sad sight at Yarmouth, and

makes one despair of one's country." By his "country" we suspect the reverend gentleman really means his "trade." The actual facts of the case are simply these. Military promenades take place on Sunday evening in the Corporation Gardens, and there are Sunday evening concerts in the Pavilion on the Corporation Pier.

Rev. John Henry Mitchell, of Coalville Vicarage, Leicester, may consider himself lucky. Being charged at Bow-street Police-court with being drunk and disorderly, and annoying ladies in Torrington-place, he explained that he had been taking brandy from morning to night on account of severe pains in his heart. He had come up to London to undergo treatment, and he promised to see his specialist at once. On this understanding he was discharged. Had he been a brick-layer he might have been dealt with less leniently.

The Rev. E. E. Corlett, curate, has obtained £50 damages in an action for slander and libel against the Rev. W. Postance, vicar of St. George's, Everton, Liverpool. The jury also awarded him £100 against Mrs. Postance. The details of the case are particularly unsavory, and show what a strange moral atmosphere the religious mind can live in.

Professor Littleton, of Alexandria, Indiana, claims to be able to produce "spontaneous generation" of life. According to report, he places a mixture of water, salt, and alcohol under a glass bell in the vicinity of a bottle of ammonia. Professor Charrin, of the College of France, however, says that Dr. Littleton's experiments prove nothing, and that he simply allows extraneous microbes into his solutions through carelessness. "The possibility of spontaneous generation," he says, "exists perhaps. More than this it is impossible to say in the present state of science." Professor Berthelot, the great French chemist, calls Dr. Littleton's discovery "a ridiculous mare's-nest." Asked whether he believed that science might some day clear up the problem of life and its origin, Professor Berthelot replied: "Facts alone are evidence. In the realm of scientific research dogmas do not exist. Even opinions are of little weight. Scientists are always engaged upon the question of spontaneous generation, a subject of tremendous difficulty. I can say this much—that Professor Littleton's method will never lead to anything."

Theological people will probably catch at this as another disproof of the theory of spontaneous generation. But in reality it is nothing of the kind. The question remains precisely where it was. It is also well to remember that both Tyndall and Huxley, who derided certain "spontaneous generation" experiments, were nevertheless confident that life did originate naturally on our planet.

Mrs. Crawford, the able Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, tells a curious and instructive story about the late President Faure. Faure was elected, largely by the votes of the Right, because he was a nobody. But this is not the whole explanation. He had a family "skeleton," and the Assumptionists held his secret, and thus had the whip hand over him. Whenever the Church party wanted fresh concessions, and were too slow in obtaining them, there was a threat of "revelations" in the *Libre Parole* or some other reactionary organ. Thus the party of religion went on politically blackmailing poor Faure to the day of his death.

"Colonel" Arthur Lynch—who, by the way, is a Freethinker—committed "treason" in fighting on the side of the Boers. Technically, this is true enough; morally, every man of common sense knows it is absurd; and it is a disgrace to England that this quixotic gentleman is still a convict in an English prison. One might exclaim, in the language of Burke, that the age of chivalry has flown. We heartily endorse Mr. Michael Davitt's protest against Mr. Lynch's continued imprisonment after the King's "glorious" visit to Ireland. Mr. Davitt contemptuously observes that "there is not a monarch in Europe, from the Emperor of all the Russias to the King of Portugal, who would have neglected, under similar circumstances, to have pardoned a solitary political prisoner belonging to the nationality of a country so visited." Ireland will remember, Mr. Davitt says, that King Edward partook of Irish hospitality for a fortnight, and went back to England with his Irish political prisoner still under lock and key. This may sound a little strange; but, after all, it is quite true; for Mr. Lynch's real offence, and the cause of all his trouble, was getting elected by the City of Galway.

We do not remember, that so far, the King has paid a State visit to any un-established Protestant ecclesiastical seminary. What their authorities will do when their turn comes will be interesting to observe. But he has gone in

full fig to that old bugbear of Protestants—Maynooth! The Romanist ministers rose to the occasion. They—by special order from Rome—received the King of this—and of their country in hats with green cords and tassels—not however because this “wearing of the green” had a patriotic symbolism—but because it is the color apportioned—without a doubt with the greatest fitness—to bishops! Besides the green around their heads, these ministers of the pillowless “son of man” wore purple “long clothing” and Irish lace. After the usual address and speech a solemn High Tea was celebrated, when the consecrated and excommunicated Head of the Anglican rival soul-blasting concern was allowed to retire to a sitting-room considerably—or as the *Times* puts it:—“by a happy inspiration”—draped, not with Irish green; nor with royal red; nor the imperial red, white, and blue—nothing so jarring—but with his Majesty’s racing colors. Nor did these green-badged “doves” hang anything so brain-racking and unfamiliar on the walls as pictures, for example of St. Laurance O’Toole or St. Malachi the Great. Not at all—they knew what was courteous—so stuck up two admirable engravings of Ambush II. and Diamond Jubilee.

Oddly enough, no intimation is given of what their pious consideration provided for Queen Alexandra. Were the walls papered with that “sweet” portrait of Prince Eddy—or Eddy; which is it?—Prince Eddyie nursing the last baby? Or with photographs of bygone “beauties” pasted upside down? Until the world knows what these green-labelled gentry thought complimentary to Queen Alexandra the history of the time ceases.

Captain Mahan, of the United States Navy, is a well-known writer on naval history. He is also a warm member of the American Episcopal Church. The other day he read a paper before the Church Club of New York on “The Apparent Decadence of the Church’s Influence.” After referring to the progress of Science and Biblical Criticism, he said that the Church’s greatest mistake, the one from which it suffered most, was acting merely on the defensive. “No war,” he observed, “was ever yet won by mere defence, least of all a war of conquest, which that of Christianity is.” No doubt this is true in one sense, but it is not true in another. It is no use taking the offensive if you know you are bound to be “licked”—and the Church knows that this is the result every time it attacks “infidelity.” Nor is there much useful advice, however honest it may be, in Captain Mahan’s suggestion that the Church should cease giving preference to social benevolence and philanthropic effort before personal religion. The time has really gone by, though Captain Mahan does not recognise the fact, for simply preaching Christ and him crucified. It is a sound instinct of self-preservation that prompts the Church to mix itself up as far as possible with philanthropy. The latter is like the salt that prevents a corpse from rotting and stinking.

We have to caution our readers likely to contract marriage with Austrians, or to settle in Austria, that a very peculiar persecution has just developed in that country. It has been decided by the law courts there that marriages between parties, one of whom is a member of no particular creed and the other a Christian, are invalid in Austria.

As with all fanatical laws, the gravest injury falls on the weak and helpless. The result of this decision will be to bastardise all the children of marriages between Freethinkers and Christians, of which there must be an immense number, as in Austria Freemasonry and Socialism are acknowledged Freethought movements, and consequently will, by depriving these children of their status, defraud them of those rights in regard to property which are attached to legitimacy.

Such fanaticisms as this, in course of time, work their own revenges. It is to be hoped that this will have the contrary effect to that for which this law is obviously designed; and, instead of deterring young men from throwing off religion, will produce a rapid anti-superstition movement among the young women, who will rise to the intellectual level of their betrothed husbands, and contract legal marriages by the simple means of ceasing, with them, to be Christians.

“The Pale Poor Curate” was the heading of a recent article in the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*. It is remarked that “the pale young curate is still much in request for ladies’ albums, and receives tokens of unvarying regard in worked slippers and other indispensable comforts; but apart from these disinterested tributes to manly virtue, he has not, as a rule, a very blissful time.” In other words, he is not well paid; though it is possible that he is as well paid as he would be in any other profession. Of course the lot of the

“old” curate is still worse. He is not sought after by the ladies, he is uninteresting, and he is shelved. Sometimes he dies in the workhouse or the asylum. It cannot be argued that this is creditable to the Church, and our contemporary speaks strongly about it. But what is the remedy? Is there not money enough in the Church if it were more fairly distributed?

Mr. G. J. Holyoake, in last week’s *Reynolds*, allowed himself to write with strange severity of some Labor and Chartist leaders. It was a striking contrast to his dulcet compliments to the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and Rev. Dr. Parker. He refers to George Odger as having made Labor hateful and perished by doing it. He also refers to Odger’s “imputative tongue,” though he does not show that Odger said any worse of the Whigs than Mr. Holyoake says in this very article of the Tories. George Odger had one of the best balanced minds we ever knew, and his platform speech was very precise and select. This we feel bound to state—not simply because he was a good Freethinker, but because he was an honorable man, and his memory is entitled to justice. We need not trouble about Mr. Holyoake’s view of Thomas Cooper. What he says of Ernest Jones is very grave—and Ernest Jones, like George Odger, was a Freethinker as well as a Republican. Mr. Holyoake speaks of Ernest Jones as a Chartist who was paid for obstructing Liberalism; paid, that is, for the words can have no other meaning, by the Tories. Mr. Holyoake may say this a hundred times and we shall disbelieve it. Ernest Jones sacrificed a fortune for the cause of the people, and that fact alone is sufficient to defend him against the accusation of receiving tainted money from the people’s enemies.

“Providence” has been active again in the Chi-fu district of China. The town of that name was inundated by masses of water pouring down from the mountains; many houses were destroyed and bridges swept away. Some 700 persons perished, and more than 2,000 are homeless and destitute.

Truly extraordinary is a story of the failure of an attempt to establish a telephone service at Saint-Etienne des Gres, situated in the Tarascon district. The necessary apparatus had been packed all ready to start for the village when the carter heard that the inhabitants, being under the odd impression that the invention was the work of the Evil One, were determined to oppose its entry, and were resolved to arm themselves with their agricultural implements, and to make a fight of it. The man said that he was willing to confide his cart and its contents to the electricians, but that as for himself he would not risk his life in such an adventure. A telegram was forwarded to Marseilles asking for instructions, and the reply came that the cart was to be left at Tarascon. What the sequel to the present deadlock will be remains to be seen, but meanwhile the good people of Saint-Etienne des Gres stoutly declare that they will have nothing to do with the telephone, which is a “diabolical machine.”—*Daily Telegraph*.

Mr. Cluer, the Worship-street magistrate, seems to have a very partial belief in the value of sworn testimony. A prisoner charged with assault in his court exclaimed, “If I’m not telling the truth, may I not leave the dock alive!” “Don’t talk to me like that,” said Mr. Cluer; “I don’t see people falling down dead in this court because they tell lies. If they did, the whole place would be covered with them.”

There appears to be a Sabbatarian battle raging in Wilkensburg, near Pittsburg—which is well known to Mr. Carnegie. The Sunday observers and non-observers are opposing each other by force and strategy. On a recent Sunday the Church people scattered barrels of ice-water all over the town, but the other side put a liberal quantity of whisky in each barrel. The consequence was a big demand for water, and more drunken people than ever were seen on the streets before. It reminds us of that marriage feast at Cana in Galilee.

We have just room for a paragraph on the Pope’s coronation, which took place last Sunday, we suppose on the principle of the better the day the better the deed. Part of the ceremony consisted in the kissing of certain parts of His Holiness’s anatomy. The Cardinals kissed his face, knees, and feet; the Bishops his knees and feet; and the Abbots his feet only. As the Pope’s pedal extremities came in for the principal share of osculation, it is to be hoped that they were cleaned and cured beforehand. At this time of the year, and in Rome, the old gentleman’s “Tribbles” would naturally require a good deal of purification before they were quite ready for the lips of his adorers.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(All Engagements suspended until September.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

F. COMERFORD.—Thanks for cutting. Of course the election of a Pope is as "worldly" a piece of business as any transacted on this globe. In reply to your query, we are happy to state that the Editor's health has greatly improved.

G. J.—The question is an eternal one, and only admits of a temperamental answer. Whether life is worth living or not, the human race will go on living, because nature will necessarily breed the race through those who have enough instinctive love of life. Practically, therefore, the only question for sane discussion is how life can be made happier than it is; or, if you prefer, less miserable. As to lying for a living, that again is a good deal a matter of taste. But, if one man is built that way, another is built to despise it; and surely the latter is as natural as the former.—On the other matter you are mistaken. We violated no confidence; we did not publish a private communication. The Rev. Forbes Phillips' letter was addressed to the Editor of the *Freethinker*.

TOM JACKSON.—Your order has been executed, and we hope you received the parcel all right. Thanks for your interesting and encouraging letter. We quite understand the difficulties you encountered in obtaining the *Freethinker*. If bare justice were done to this journal by wholesale and retail newsagents our circulation would be quite remunerative. Argument, unfortunately, is lost upon persons full of prejudice. Bigotry is a beast; it always was, and it always will be; and the only effective policy against it is one of extermination. With regard to your query, we advise you to read *Infidel Death-Beds*, which contains sketches of historic Freethinkers, *Crimes of Christianity*, and Ingersoll's principal lectures, such as *The Gods*, *Ghosts*, and *The Dying Creed*.

IN reply to E. Rosenberg "Abracadabra" writes to say that his opinion as to what portions of the Old Testament writings may reasonably be considered historical was given in the introductory paragraphs to paper v. on "Moses and the Pentateuch" (*Freethinker*, June 17, 1903).

WE have received several letters in defence of Vegetarianism, as might have been expected, and we shall print some, if not all, of them next week; there being no room in the present issue. One correspondent wonders why we inserted the Anti-Vegetarian's letter in our last issue. Is this quite sensible? Should not all sides have a hearing?

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your cuttings

G. S. STEEL.—(1) Paine was quite right in speaking of Shakespeare's Queen Mab. This is not the name of a play, but of a fairy personage who is the subject of one of Shakespeare's beautiful descriptions. (2) The "Blasphemy" articles were stopped in consequence of Mr. Foote's illness. (3) The Bovril premises cover the site of the Hall of Science. (4) Morison's copyright would not belong to the persons you refer to. We don't see much use in publishing the Preface apart from the work itself.

T. LESLIE LUDWIG.—Mr. Foote will see to the matter very shortly on his return to London.

R. LARGE AND OTHERS.—Your letters in reply to "Rationalist" will appear as far as possible in our next.

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

We reproduce in another column from *Reynolds's Newspaper* a report of the recent annual demonstration at Paris to commemorate the martyrdom of Etienne Dolet, who was burnt in 1546. Many years ago Mr. Foote wrote a long and careful essay on this Freethought martyr. It was printed in

early numbers of the *Freethinker*, and Charles Bradlaugh expressed in the *National Reformer* a hope that it would be republished. It is one of the papers that Mr. Foote intends to include in the collection of his longer and more important writings that was referred to lately in our columns. Arrangements are being made for the publication of this book at an early date.

The correspondence under the headings of "Science and Religion" and "Christian Fables" continues in the *Yarmouth Mercury*. Mr. J. W. de Caux writes briefly and tersely. He says he is waiting to hear something from the Rev. C. Lloyd Engström, who does not appear to be coming up to the scratch again. He also asks Arthur Blows, who was referred to in our columns last week, to supply fewer statements and more evidence. "A Student of French History" also corrects the statement of John Rudge, who, it may be remembered, spoke of "Voltaire and Tom Payne" (such was his spelling) as Atheists who brought about the French Revolution! The other two correspondents are Christians. One of them, signing himself M. Pearson, stands up for the old Tree of Knowledge story, though he is particularly careful not to commit himself to its actual truth, and indeed comments upon it as though it were an allegory. The other Christian correspondent signs himself T. R. Greenacre, and is, we understand, a Primitive Methodist preacher. We are not surprised, therefore, at his bigotry and impertinence. He prates about the "licentiousness and profligacy" that would prevail without the "restraints of religion," and declares his opinion that Mr. de Caux is merely a jester and has no serious object in view—which is the greatest absurdity to all who know him.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw, who never concealed his Atheism, appears to have been tempted by Mr. Robert Blatchford's success in attacking Christianity in the *Clarion*. Mr. Shaw's publishers announce a new book of his, to be "ready shortly," entitled *Man and Super-Man*. We shall bring it to our readers' attention as soon as published. A book by Mr. Shaw with that title ought to be very interesting.

Byron is reported to have said once, "When they find out Shelley where shall we all be?" Byron was no fool; he knew a good thing when he saw it; and he was perfectly well aware that Shelley was a great poet. But most people are fools, and the great mob of Shelley's contemporaries thought him very small fish. Even professional scribblers, after denouncing his Atheism, ventured to doubt if he had written anything that would live. As for the great British public, they cut him dead, and refused to buy his immortal masterpieces. When the magnificent *Prometheus Unbound* was published, a certain reviewer (it would be too cruel to name him) said that the "Unbound" was all right, for who would ever think of binding such a volume? Shelley's political writings were considered beneath contempt. Yet, during the present year, a single broadside of Shelley's, the Declaration of Rights, together with a single thin pamphlet, the Proposals for an Association, have fetched the enormous price of £530 in the auction room. What a change!

The August number of the *Humanitarian*, the organ of the Humanitarian League, is an interesting publication. We commend this little penny monthly to our readers' attention. It is published by W. Reeves, 85 Charing Cross-road, London, W.C., and can also be obtained from the League's secretary, 53 Chancery-lane, W.C.

Mr. I. K. Washburn, editor of the *Boston Investigator*, whom we had the pleasure of meeting a few weeks ago in London, must be back in the "hub of the universe" by this time. We hope he has returned with a good stock of health, as we are sure he has returned with a good stock of new experience—for he is evidently a man of keen observation. We believe he is going to write at length in the *Investigator* on what he saw and heard during his trip to Europe. Meanwhile we note something brief on his voyage from America to Liverpool, and his first view of London. He seems to have been favorably impressed by our vast city. Indeed, he so admires English manners, patience, intelligence, and absence of gabble, that he exclaims, "One feels a little pride in the fact that his ancestors were English." But he talks one great heresy in an Englishman's ears. "Nine days of the ocean," he says, "increased the charms of the land. If we could have our own way we would convert ninety-nine hundredths of the water into land, and have rivers where now are the great seas." Would you, Mr. Washburn? But so would not the sons of the old Mistress of the Seas. We suppose you are a bad sailor. If you could get over that, however, you would view the matter differently. You have

some poetry in your composition, for your addresses and writings show it; and what a loss to the poetry of this world would be the annihilation of the ocean! The mighty ocean, with all

The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores.

No, Mr. Washburn; forget that sour stomach and those unsteady legs, and return to a saner view of things. You will believe in the ocean again some day; and, in the meantime, there is fortunately no chance of your rather Dutch wish being realised. The ocean, as the Irishman would say, holds the field.

Mr. Ernest Pack passed successfully through his ordeal at the Leeds Police Court, where he was summoned for "disorderly conduct" in Hyde Park Road, on Sunday evening, July 26. Inspector Meldrum gave evidence to the effect that the defendant, after lecturing on Woodhouse Moor, was seen in the centre of a crowd outside, walking up and down, and shouting and selling pamphlets. He asked defendant to move away, but he did not do so; and the crowd, which appeared to be hostile, was so great that the traffic had to be diverted into another street. Mr. Pack denied that there was the slightest disorder, except what the police may have caused themselves; the crowd was in no degree hostile, and the charge was altogether of a most trivial nature. His Worship said that he was inclined to agree that selling literature in a loud voice was not the ordinary lawful use of the highway, and, in a sense, was disorderly conduct, but conduct which, so far as he knew, had been permitted without interruption in many hundreds of cases. If the booing and yelling alleged actually took place, the people who indulged in it acted in an infinitely worse way than the defendant himself, and ought to have been proceeded against. He came to the conclusion that there was a degree of disorder, which possibly brought the case within the Act of Parliament, but it was of a trivial nature, and in the circumstances he would deal with the defendant under section 16 of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, and order him to pay the cost of the summons.

We hope this will be a lesson to the Leeds police. What have they got to do with Mr. Pack's opinions? And, on the other hand, what right have they—even if a crowd is hostile—to molest a man who is only doing what he is fully entitled to do both by law and morality? Their business is to protect him; they should molest those who interfere with him.

M. Camille Pelletan, the Minister of Marine in France, has decided to suppress the baptism, or "christening" as we call it in England, of new ships. M. Pelletan has also done what no previous Minister of Marine has dared to do—abolished compulsory attendance at Mass for bluejackets. It is now optional for all. Good Friday used to be a day of deep mourning in the whole French navy. This abuse has also been suppressed. Of course the Clericals are enraged, but M. Pelletan intends to uphold justice in spite of them.

The *Athenæum* speaks rather severely of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. This it has a right to do, but we are rather surprised at the character of its principal objection. The following passage is peculiar in the leading literary journal:—"A Bible dictionary, in this country at all events, is addressed in the first instance to religious people and to those who profess the Christian faith. Yet the founder of Christianity is described in those articles in this encyclopædia which deal with His life and death as a being in all respects like other men, whose birth and death took place in the ordinary course of nature, and who never in His life made any assertion of His divinity, and who never rose from the dead. We are not concerned here with all the consequences of this proposition, but it is plain that, if it be accepted in its entirety, every Christian Church that has existed during the last nineteen centuries has been occupied with the propagation of error, and of error so tremendous that it is difficult to suppose that any countervailing benefits can have sprung from its teaching." Now we venture to say that this is great nonsense, although it is written so gravely. The only honest question at issue is whether the writers of the articles in this *Encyclopædia* have told the truth. If they have done this, they have done what is right. Surely the *Athenæum* cannot mean that they should have told falsehoods to keep the Christians in countenance! For the rest, we admit that our contemporary puts the alternative admirably. The Christian Church has been occupied in the propagation of tremendous error.

The Tabernacle of the Congregation.—II.

(Continued from page 507.)

WE have now to see whether any of the historical books of the Old Testament contain evidence of the grand Tabernacle described in Exodus, or of its attendant priests and Levites. In the book of Joshua this tabernacle is stated to have been set up in Shiloh after the conquest of the land (xviii. 1), and here it is supposed to have remained during the long period of the Judges, and during the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon. The book of Joshua, however, is a late composition by the same authors as the Pentateuch, and must for that reason be set aside. We have therefore at our disposal but the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings, though even these, as I shall have to point out, are not free from interpolations inserted by later editors. We commence, then, with the book of Judges, which contains the earliest history of the Israelites now extant, and for a period of over four hundred years.

Now, after a careful examination of this book, we find not only no mention of the great Mosaic tabernacle, or of the army of priests and Levites supposed to be engaged in its service, but the scraps of real history contained in the book all point to the fact that no such building or priesthood was then in existence. There is, indeed, one reference to the mythical Aaronic priesthood, but this occurs in an interpolated passage which is placed below within brackets:—

Jud. xx. 26-28.—"Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto Bethel, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until even; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. And the children of Israel asked of the Lord [For the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, and Phinehas, the son of Elcazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days] saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin?"

Here, it will be perceived, the interpolated passage has been placed in the middle of the sentence, "And the children of Israel asked of the Lord saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin?" In the original paragraph it was "the children of Israel" themselves, not a high priest, who fasted, offered sacrifice, and inquired of the Lord. Moreover Phinehas, whose name is here interpolated as living at the end of the period of the Judges, is stated in the book of Numbers to have been a contemporary of Moses (xxv. 7, 11; xxxi. 6). But even in this passage no mention is made of the grand Tabernacle; only the "ark of the covenant" is named. The Israelites, like every other nation of "those times," had an ark sacred to the god they worshipped; but this ark was not the elaborately constructed work of art described in the Priestly code. Let the reader turn to Ex. xxv. 10-21, and read the Lord's instructions respecting the form, dimensions, materials, and ornamentation of the ark he required to be made—and which is stated to have been actually made (Ex. xxxvii.)—and then let him compare the "ark of the covenant" so described with the real ark which existed in the days of the Deuteronomist, who, possibly following tradition, ascribed its origin to the time of Moses. The last-named mythical lawgiver he represents as saying:—

"At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood.....So I made an ark of acacia wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount.....And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments.....and the Lord gave them unto me. And I turned and came down from the Mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made, and there they be, as the Lord commanded me." (Deut. x. 1-5).

Here, it will be seen, the only direction the Lord gave was: "Make thee an ark of wood," the form and dimensions being implied to be the same as all

other sacred arks of that period. This ark we hear of in later times—in the days of Eli, David, and Solomon—but we can find no evidence of the existence of the Mosaic Tabernacle or of its imaginary priests and custodians.

The first historical notice we have of the Lord's "ark of wood" is 1 Sam. iv. 3, whence we learn that that sacred box was kept at Shiloh, where also was a "house of the Lord." That both the ark and the house dedicated to Yahveh had remained for a long period at Shiloh is confirmed by Jer. vii. 12—which fact accounts for the mythical Tabernacle being represented as set up in that place by the author of the book of Joshua. Furthermore, if we are to find this tabernacle and its attendant priests and Levites, we must look for them somewhere in the neighborhood of Shiloh—a quest I now proceed to make.

Only some five or six miles from Shiloh was the little town of Ophrah, where lived Gideon, the son of Joash, whom the Lord called to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of the Midianites. After gaining a great victory over this people Gideon, who declined the honor of being made king, asked the victors to give him all the golden ear-rings among the spoils taken from the enemy. This they willingly did. "And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went a whoring after it there; and it became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house" (Judg. viii. 27). This "ephod" was not a garment, but an image, set up, no doubt, beside an altar of Yahveh, and was worshipped by "all Israel" of that period, evidently without the smallest idea that in so doing they were breaking the Lord's commands. Yet we are asked to believe that at this very time, and but a few miles from Ophrah, there stood a grand Tabernacle sacred to the worship of Yahveh, the tabernacle being served by a large number of priests and several thousands of assistant priests (Levites), all acting under the orders of a divinely appointed high priest who (there being no king at that time) exercised supreme authority in the land. What were all these priests and Levites doing that—not only at this time, but during the whole period of the Judges—they allowed the people, again and again, to renounce the worship of Yahveh and serve the other gods of Canaan? There cannot be the slightest doubt that had the Israelites entered the land accompanied by the noble army of priests and Levites described in the "books of Moses," and with the grand Tabernacle of the Congregation in their midst, they could never have faltered in their allegiance to Yahveh. It is quite clear from this portion of the history in Judges that no such tabernacle and no army of sacrificers engaged in its service were then in the land.

We come next to the very ancient narrative of the man Micah who had "an house of gods"—that is to say, a graven image, a molten image, an ephod, and a teraphim. This good man lived in "the hill country of Ephraim," in the same district as Shiloh, where the grand Tabernacle and the great army of priests and Levites were supposed to be. This pious man, we are told, consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest (Judg. xvii. 5). In extenuation of the acts related in this account the compiler adds: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." He might have added, Neither were there in those days the many thousands of men of the Levitical priesthood described in the Pentateuch, much less was such a body of priests within a couple of hours' walk of Micah's house. And now we come upon one of the few real Levites who were at that time in the land. The account proceeds:—

"And there was a young man out of Bethlehem-judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the cityto sojourn where he could find a place; and he came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.....And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest,

and I will give thee ten pieces of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals."

This nameless Levite, who was walking about looking for a berth, accepted the offer, "and Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest." Then was Micah's heart glad, and he said, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." There is much to be learnt from this narrative of the life of the Israelites at this period. Upon one point—the only one with which we are now concerned—there cannot be the least doubt: there was no army of Levites officiating then at a stately tabernacle in Shiloh. Levites in "those days" were not very plentiful in the land. Micah's Levite had travelled all the way from Bethlehem-judah, and came quite as a godsend to that good man, who most certainly would never have "consecrated" one of his sons as a makeshift priest had he known where to find a professional one. It is to be noticed, also, that Micah's Levite made no objection to ministering before Micah's images, but took this part of the proceedings as a matter of course—a proceeding in harmony with the statement of Ezekiel that the Levites prior to his days had "ministered unto them before their idols." And this brings us to the question, How could the young man "of the family of Judah," who was engaged as a priest by Micah, be a Levite? By the "family" of Judah is, of course, meant the *tribe* of Judah, as will be seen from the continuation of the narrative.

We are told that in those days "the children of Dan sent of their *family* five men" to seek a suitable territory that might be acquired with little risk to themselves (xviii. 2). Here the word "family" obviously signifies "tribe." These five Danites, travelling northward, came near Micah's house, and recognised the voice of the Levite. After inquiring how he came there and what he was doing, they requested him to "ask counsel of God" as to the success of their mission. "And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the Lord is your way wherein ye go." Later on, six hundred armed men "of the *family* of the Danites" set out to take possession of the territory selected by their spies. When passing near Micah's house the five guides called a halt, and "said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in this house an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? Now, therefore, consider what ye have to do." The Danites did not consider long, but forcibly took possession of all Micah's gods, and carried them away, the Levite included. To the latter their argument was thoroughly convincing: "Come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for thee to be priest unto the house of one man, or to be priest unto a *tribe* and a *family* in Israel?" In the last sentence, it will be noticed, the words "tribe" and "family" are used synonymously.

Arrived at their destination, the Danites slaughtered all the peaceable and unsuspecting inhabitants, and appropriated their land and city, after which they "set up for themselves the graven image" taken from Micah. Then comes the following interpolated passage:—

"And Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land" (xviii. 30).

The nameless Levite of the tribe of Judah is now made a descendant of Moses (who is said to have been of the tribe of Levi), and thus becomes a Levite of the Priestly code. Nevertheless, this grandson of the great lawgiver disregards two of the Lord's commands in the "books of Moses"—that of serving elsewhere than at the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and of ministering before idols. Every reader will, however, perceive that this interpolation could not have been written until after "the day of the captivity of the land." This is certain; whereas the story of Micah and the Danites has all the marks of ancient history, and is probably as old as the time of Samuel. It is also quite obvious from the narrative that the writer of the original account was un-

acquainted with the name of Micah's Levite. That worthy individual is mentioned no less than fourteen times, and in the following terms: "A young man..... the man.....the Levite.....the young man.....the Levite.....the young man.....the young man the Levite.....the priest.....the young man the Levite.....the priest.....the priest.....the priest.....the priest.....the priest." Then comes the interpolation written after the Exile: "Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses."

It is quite evident from the foregoing account that there were but few Levites in the land in "those days"; and most assuredly there was no grand Tabernacle, with many thousands of priests and Levites employed in its service, standing within a short distance of Micah's house, in "those days." The few Levites who were then in the land were not the mythical Levites described in the Priestly code. And this brings us again to the question, Who were the real historical Levites? Does the term Levite denote the descendants of a man named Levi? or is it the ancient name of a class of professional priests, irrespective of the tribe to which they belonged? In Gen. xxix. 34 the name Levi is stated to be derived from *lavah* ("joined"), though that is not the primary meaning of that verb. In other words, in the old unpointed Hebrew *lvi* is said to be derived from *l.v.h.* This appears to be very far-fetched, even apart from the fact that the derivation appears in a fictitious narrative. It seems to me much more probable that the name was derived from *leviah* or *livyah* (in unpointed Hebrew *l.v.i.h.*), which signifies a wreath, chaplet, or garland (Prov. i. 9; iv. 9). We know that in many nations of antiquity the priests who offered the sacrifices wore garlands round their heads, and sometimes carried them in their hands; also, that the victim itself was often adorned with garlands (Acts xiv. 19). It is probable, then, that in the earliest times the priests of Canaan followed the same practice, and took their name from the ornament worn. However this may be, it is quite clear from the ancient narrative in Judges that the term "Levite" did not denote a man of the tribe of Levi.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

A Blast from Hell.

THE appearance of Mr. G. W. Foote's article, entitled "Heaven and Hell," in a recent number of the *Freethinker*, gives a peculiar interest to the following extracts from the *Hades Howler*. This journal is produced in the lower regions, and is printed on asbestos, in accordance with climatic exigencies. The following items are selected from the column entitled "General News," and will be interesting reading for Freethinkers:—

"The numerous friends of Charles Bradlaugh will be rejoiced to hear that he has passed successfully through the Boiling Lake Department, and is now undergoing the red-hot pincer treatment. The head imp of the Boiling Lake Department has received a very gratifying testimonial from his departed guest, praising highly the consideration everywhere displayed in the application of the torture."

"It is reported that the surprise everywhere expressed at the arrival of the Archbishop of — is not shared in official circles."

"Special arrangements are being made in the Fire and Smoke Department for the reception of Giordano Bruno, who will be due there in the course of a few weeks. As Bruno had a considerable experience of this method of torture during his earthly existence, the head of the department has decided to make the stokers work overtime during his stay."

"An indignation meeting was held by the members of the Gridiron Department, to protest against the use of iced drinks being allowed to Pope —. The imp in charge of the department pointed out to the protestors that the privilege was accorded to the Pope for services rendered during his earthly existence. It was finally decided, after heated discussion, to refer the matter to Our Mighty Prince."

The greater part of the paper is occupied by a long report of the annual dinner, from which the following is an extract:—

"The Assembly Hall, where the sittings of the Central Governing Body are held, was filled with a brilliant assemblage on Tuesday evening last, the occasion of the annual dinner. The hall was gracefully festooned with asbestos roses, and brilliantly lighted by the lurid rays emanating from Our Mighty Prince, who occupied the chair.

"The Chairman, for an obvious reason, experienced considerable difficulty in taking the chair, and his remark to the effect that he could a tale unfold was greatly appreciated. When the merriment excited by this apposite quotation had subsided, Professor Huxley rose to propose 'The Chairman.'

"During his earthly life,' said the wrong dishonorable gentleman, 'he had been foolish enough to doubt the existence of their Chairman, and had, in fact, coined the word 'agnostic' to describe his state of mind upon the subject. His orthodox friends had always assured him certainty was far preferable to the Agnostic position. He agreed with them thoroughly. (Cheers.) Certainty was preferable. He had been happier far since the achievement of certainty concerning the existence of the Chairman, for his acquaintance with that gentleman was one of which he would never cease to be proud.'

"Loud bursts of applause greeted this tribute to Our Mighty Prince, even the imps in waiting giving free vent to their enthusiasm.

"The wrong dishonorable gentleman, continuing, said 'he was no longer in any uncertainty concerning the justice of the words 'old gentleman,' as descriptive of their Chairman. (Hear, hear.) He had now spent a fairly considerable time down below, and he could testify to the fact that the torture was always administered in the most gentlemanly way. (Loud cheers.) He had heard most terrifying accounts of their Chairman from his orthodox friends, so that his arrival in Hades had come as a double surprise; firstly, at its very existence, and, secondly, at the discovery that the 'Devil was not so black as he is painted.' (Hear, hear.) May the influence of our Chairman never cease increasing, may his kingdom continue to extend for ever and for evermore.'

"Mr. Charles Bradlaugh seconded the toast in a neat little speech, in which he said he was in the unfortunate position of having to acknowledge he had been wrong; but the bitter pill was effectually gilded by the consciousness that if he had held other opinions he would never have made the acquaintance of their Chairman. (Hear, hear.) He endorsed the Professor's remarks most cordially, and would always be proud of the help he had given to the extension of their Chairman's influence upon earth. He was but an instrument, a humble instrument, but he could not help feeling a glow of pride when he reflected upon the good work he had been able to accomplish. (Cheers.)

"The toast was drunk amid tremendous enthusiasm, and the vast hall rang with the cheers of the assembled guests.

"His Satanic Majesty, in replying to the toast said, 'Damned men and damsels, I feel quite unable to give adequate expression to the multiplicity of emotions which throng upon me at these magnificent tributes from my old and dearly loved friends, Professor Huxley and Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, who labored in the past so nobly and generously in my service. (Hear, hear.) Especially was I pleased at the handsome, I might almost say the effusive, way in which the learned Professor referred to the considerate methods employed in the application of the torture. As you are well aware, damned souls and damsels, I am placed in a somewhat delicate position. I regard all those under my charge as my dearest friends, but I have a duty to perform—a painful duty—yet a duty that cannot be neglected. The torture has to be administered, and I think it far better that it should be done in a pleasant and gentlemanly way. (Cheers.) I am glad to see you all agree with me, my damned friends. (Renewed cheers.) No one could ever accuse me of bigotry; I have always tried to cultivate friendly relations with everyone. When I look round this festive gathering and see the pleasant faces of my valued friends—Rabelais, Swift, Sterne, and Bishop Colenso—I find gratifying proof of my Catholicity. (Hear, hear.) I have always tried to maintain friendly relations with the teachers of religion, and it is very satisfactory for me to reflect that a great number of my clients are drawn from the ranks of the clergy. (Applause.) Still more satisfactory is the ungrudging response of the

clergy to my treatment of them, and I think no better proof of the wisdom of my methods could be desired than the fact that the clergy do more for the promotion of my kingdom upon earth than any other class of men. (Applause.) In conclusion, I thank the whole damned lot of you, and hope our present friendly relations will be maintained throughout the eternity we are to spend together."

"LITCHWOOD."

Great Freethought Demonstration.

THE annual demonstration of Freethinkers took place in Paris on Sunday afternoon in commemoration of the martyrdom of Etienne Dolet, who was burnt by the priests in 1546 for his anti-religious opinions. Deputy Hubbard, who will be remembered here as one of the deputies which met in Conference with our own M.P.'s on the question of international arbitration, Messrs. Charbonnel and Berenger, editors of the papers, *L'Action* and *La Raison*, and some of the delegates from the Spanish groups arrived on the Place de l'Hotel de Ville and were met by Reynolds's special representative. A procession was formed, which was then about 40,000 strong, many of the number being ladies.

A ridiculously large force of policemen accompanied us, and the whole way was guarded by a small army of horse-guards, cuirassiers, and sergeants de ville, all under the direction of M. Lepine, Prefect of Police—in all fully 5,000. They allowed us to start at 2.30, but at a funeral pace, and immediately the demonstrators commenced singing "L'Internationale," alternating each verse with cries of "Hou, hou! la calotte!" and "Vive Combes!"

Probably many of your readers know that *la calotte* refers to the little cap worn by ecclesiastics, and which is to Freethinkers the symbol of all clericalism. The file passed over the bridge Notre Dame, by the Hotel Dieu Hospital, and in Rue Lagrange came to the statue of Etienne Dolet standing in the Place Maubert, Boulevard St. Germain. There M. Lepine tried again his system of dividing the group in small factions, but Deputy Hubbard interfered and reminded the Prefect of his promises, and his efforts were so successful that each person was allowed to file before the statue, each raising his hat in honor of the victim of Freethought.

After the demonstration, several public meetings took place in different halls in Paris, and the votes proved that the number of demonstrators was nearly ten times larger than last year, and so for the first time Freethinkers were allowed to pay their annual visit in freedom from molestation, and with the hearty goodwill and cheers of the populace.

—Reynolds's Newspaper.

Correspondence.

CURIOUS COMFORT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With regard to the recent religious census taken in London by the *Daily News*, it is interesting to note that a pamphlet, which I enclose, has been published by a leading minister of the South London Wesleyan Mission. The point to which I wish to draw your attention is this:—

The compiler of this interesting little pamphlet gives the following figures to show the decrease in attendance at the several places of worship:—

Church of England, decrease	...	...	...	127,340
Congregational	..	..	..	19,376
Baptist	...	...	...	13,750
Wesleyan	...	...	...	4,261

This is a very fair and straightforward statement of the position of affairs; but he precedes this statement with a remark that hardly does him credit as a minister of Christ. He says: "There will be some comfort to Wesleyans in the relative decreases of the other large denominations."

Strange, is it not? It seems that these Wesleyans derive some comfort from the thought that, even if their efforts to proclaim the "tidings of great joy" somewhat belie their expectations, other denominations meet with still less success.

It seems to me, Sir, that this is an instance of gross commercialism. Provided that they are not surpassed by other branches, the Wesleyans care not a rap if their own numbers decrease. They treat things spiritual in a very secular and businesslike manner; I am afraid that they measure their success by their position on the list rather than by the number of souls they manage to save from a hell of fire and torture, which has no real existence, but which is purely the phantom and mirage of their own diseased imaginations. I am not criticising this particular minister alone, for he is a

man who commands respect and admiration, but the class as a whole.

Such a statement as the one quoted above cannot fail to excite a prejudice against them in the sight of those who, as it is, regard them with no favoring eyes; it is another nail in their coffin; it is another flaw in the building, which will help ultimately to destroy the whole edifice of their faith, and to bring the ruins of Christianity thundering about their ears.

Once purity of motive is gone, what is left to Christianity?
G. C. M.

SMITH & SONS' BOYCOTT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Two or three years ago, like our friend G. M. Cooper, I tried to obtain the *Freethinker* at Smith & Sons' bookstall, and, with all credit to our local bookstall manager here, who tried twice to get it for me, the firm declined to supply it. I next tried nearly all the local newsagents; but as they obtain their goods through Smith & Sons, they, too, were helpless.

However, not to be beat, and also to get even with the great S. & S., I wrote Miss Vance for trade terms, which she readily gave me, and also the address of a friend or two in the neighborhood, who were (like myself) quarterly subscribers. I started with *half a dozen*. I am now taking a dozen weekly, and a dozen *Pioneers* monthly also, and I have never sent a copy back for exchange. So in my case the high-handed action of Smith & Sons has done our cause a good turn (unintentionally, of course).

Their action also helped me to decide to become a shareholder in the Freethought Publishing Co., when it was formed, to help to fight the great "censor monopoly."

I cordially invite our friend (and anyone else) to go and do likewise.

J. O. BATES

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JESUS IN A NEW ROLE.

A pretty little story—though evidently rather apocryphal—is being circulated amongst the ungodly. Here it is.

A certain parson was in the habit of visiting a neighboring colliery during the dinner-hour in order to tell the colliers a few stale fairy-tales by Matthew & Co., Unlimited (by the truth). Now, as he did not wish to appear as though he deemed himself superior to these worthy miners, the parson was wont on these occasions to don his oldest clothes and carry his Bible in a red handkerchief.

Thus arrayed, he one day encountered a fresh face in the person of a collier standing alone near the shaft. "Friend," asked the parson, "do you know Jesus?" "Naw," replied the man, "but mebbe mah mate does;" and then he shouted to a collier some yards away: "Bill!" "A up." "Dost thee know Jasus?" "What?" "Dost know Jasus?" "Naw, whoi?"

"Oh, I thowt happen thlaw did, becas there's a bloke 'ere wi' his blanked dinner!"

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, R. P. Edwards.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies. Brockwell Park, 3.15, W. J. Ramsey; 6, Mr. Needes, "The Christian God."

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste): 11.30, J. Toope.

FINSBURY BRANCH N. S. S. (Clerkenwell-green): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, E. B. Rose.

STRATFORD GROVE: 7, G. Parsons, "Fables of Jesus."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Hyde Park, near Marble Arch): 11.30; Hammersmith Broadway, 7.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

BIRKENHEAD (Park Gates): Thursday, 13, at 8, H. Percy Ward, "Why I am an Atheist."

BRADFORD (Town Hall Square): 11, H. Percy Ward, "What is Secularism?"

BRIGHOUSE (New Market): Saturday, 22, at 7, Ernest Pack, "Ghosts."

CREWE (The Market Square): Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. 18, 19, and 20, at 7.45, H. Percy Ward.

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School): Annual Services, 2.30, J. M. Robertson, "Christianity and the Sword"; 6.30, "The Policy of Mr. Chamberlain." Hymns and choruses by the Choir, assisted by the Failsworth String Band.

HALIFAX (George's-square): Tuesday, 18, at 7, Ernest Pack, "Heaven and Hell."

KEIGHLEY (Skipton-road): Thursday, 20, at 7, Ernest Pack, "What must we do to be Saved?"

LEEDS (Woodhouse Moor): 3, H. Percy Ward, "Why I Cannot be a Christian"; 6.30, "The Bible God."

LIVERPOOL (Islington-square): 7, John Hammond, "A Search for the Soul"; Edge Hill Church, Monday, 17, at 8, H. Percy Ward, "The Jokes of Jehovah."

SHIPLEY (Market-place): Friday, 21, at 7, Ernest Pack, "Adam the Dust-Man."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (Market-place): 11, Ernest Pack, "Adam the Dust-Man"; 3, "Miracles"; 6.30, "Heaven and Hell." Monday, 17, at 7, "The Bible and Beer."

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