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As man domesticates the animals, or chooses those which suit his purpose, and abolishes the rest, so does reason govern the moods of the brain, feeds upon its tranquil emotions and compresses those which are fierce, governs its imaginations, and in a word civilises the savage countries of the original head.

—GARTH WILKINSON.

What of the Night?

IT was a theologian of distinction in his day, Dr. Isaac Watts, who observed that "quibbles have no place in the search after truth." Probably the famous hymn-writer knew by a bitter experience how prone divines are to indulge in subtle evasions. To-day Dr. Watts's theology is thoroughly antiquated and unbelievable; but a hundred and seventy years ago it was considered almost excessively liberal and progressive in its tone, and doubtless there were those who frowned upon it in consequence. Those were the days of narrow, bigoted orthodoxy, when independent thinking was not permissible, and when Reason was looked upon as an enemy of true religion. In the defence of such a position a vast amount of false logic was of necessity employed, against which Dr. Watts's liberalism would naturally be in revolt. And yet, at that time, Science had made but few discoveries that militated against the Faith. It is true that Newton's *Principia* appeared in 1687, when Dr. Watts was in his thirteenth year; but it was not till 1755 that Kant's great work appeared, entitled, *General Natural History of the Heavens, or an Attempt to Conceive and to Explain the Origin of the Universe mechanically, according to the Newtonian Laws*, eight years after Watts's death. Laplace's *Exposition of the System of the World* was published in 1796. It is to the nineteenth century, however, that the honor belongs of having completely revolutionised men's conceptions of the Universe. The discovery of Evolution by Darwin supplied the world with a new key to the interpretation of Nature and her processes. That key is now in universal use. The evolutionary principle applies everywhere, and is of incalculable service in all departments of scientific research.

Now, nothing is clearer than that Science has undermined the foundations of orthodox theology. Speaking of Laplace's *Exposition of the System of the World*, Professor Haeckel observes that it "destroyed at its roots the legend of creation that had hitherto prevailed, or the Mosaic narrative in the Bible." It is evident that Laplace himself cherished the same conviction. One day the great Napoleon asked him, "What room is there for God in your system?" and Laplace courageously answered, "Sire, I had no need for that unfounded hypothesis." Darwin's *Origin of Species* was more seriously iconoclastic still. It cut the ground from under the doctrines of man's special creation, the Fall, and Original Sin, and so necessitated the recasting of the whole of theology. All the divines who have accepted the teaching of Science are convinced that orthodox theology is wholly discredited, and that unless its foundations are laid anew all belief in the Supernatural is doomed. Consequently the progressive theology of

to-day has divested itself of many doctrines which fifty years ago were regarded as essential elements of the Christian Faith. The Fall, Original Sin, the Infallibility of the Bible, the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Atonement, Justification by Faith, and the New Birth have all been either abandoned or radically reconstructed. Not a single dogma has been allowed to remain unaltered. As Professor Drummond used to say, we have now a new Bible and a brand new system of theology. That inimitable rhetorician did his full share towards introducing the new condition of things.

But we must not conclude from this that the old orthodoxy is dead. As a matter of fact it is very much alive throughout Christendom, especially in Germany and Great Britain. The Thirty-Nine Articles and the Westminster Confession of Faith have been neither abolished nor modified, and I am not aware that the Continental Churches have adopted new Creeds. Evangelical preaching is practically the same to-day as it was fifty years ago. It still appeals to the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God, and it is still loyal to a moderate Calvinism or to a mild Arminianism. The Higher Criticism is still under a ban, and such men as Canons Cheyne, Driver, and Henson are still held up to execration. Aware of this, Professor Haeckel consented to deliver three lectures at Berlin, under the general title of *Last Words on Evolution*. It is not my intention to review those eloquent lectures here, but I am impelled to notice a review of them that appeared in the *Daily News* for February 10, and which is from the pen of Mr. Bray, L.C.C. Mr. Bray tells us that "there is an element of tragedy in the scene of an old man battling in vain against a youthful and a vigorous foe." The reviewer does not inform us who or what this "youthful and vigorous foe" is. The truth is that the foe against which Professor Haeckel does battle is the orthodox Church, which though often "vigorous" cannot accurately be described as "youthful." Mr. Bray continues: "But there is a deeper tragedy than this—the tragedy of an old man, unable to read the signs of the times, fiercely defending a position which no one seriously desires to attack, and gathering his strength to deliver a blow at an enemy which has long since ceased to exist." Both tragedies exist only in Mr. Bray's own imagination, the only tragedy in the present case being the tragedy of a reviewer misunderstanding and misrepresenting his author. Mr. Bray must be living in a Fool's Paradise if he believes that the opposition to the doctrine of evolution is dead. So far is it from being dead that there are thousands of ministers of religion who indulge in it as a fine luxury every Sunday. There are doctors of divinity not a few whose hostility to modern Science knows no bounds. Has Mr. Bray never heard of the Bible League, the sole object of which is "to promote the Reverential Study of the Holy Scriptures, and to resist the varied attacks made upon their Inspiration and Infallibility as the Word of God?" Has he never studied the writings of such scholars as Professor James Orr and Dr. A. T. Pierson, who loyally adhere to the first three chapters of Genesis, and who make the Fall in Eden the starting point of their theology, and the basis of the need of a Redeemer? If he has, then there is an element of dishonesty in his criticism.

This is how he writes of the distinguished German veteran:—

"He is still back in the days of his youth, and sees the doctrines of Christianity expressed in the hard and rude outlines of half a century ago. To him the central truth of the Christian Faith is to be found in the history of Adam and Eve, and the primitive fig-leaves of primeval Paradise. Before the light of evolution the fig-leaves have withered, and 'the grand old gardener and his wife' have shuffled out of sight, and with their passing, in his opinion, Christianity has passed as a living religion."

Mr. Bray has written in wilful ignorance, or in open defiance, of the facts. The fig-leaves have not withered and "the grand old gardener and his wife" have not shuffled out of sight. They are, on the contrary, very much in evidence in all evangelical pulpits, and much is made of them in the working theology of the Churches. Only a few months ago there appeared in the *Daily News* a brief notice of a book by Professor Orr, in which surprise was expressed at the Professor's advocacy of the historicity of the Fall-Story in Genesis. Dr. Orr is an able and intelligent conservative who places the Fall-Story among the essential contents of the Christian Faith. Mr. Bray and those who think with him seem to forget that the doctrine of evolution is anti-Christian and anti-Biblical. If the doctrine of evolution is true, one at least of the doctrines of the Bible is false. If Darwin was right Paul must have been wrong. But to say that Paul was mistaken is equivalent to admitting that Christianity is not a supernaturally revealed religion. The fundamental position of the Higher Critics, as put by Kuenen, is that "no distinction can be admitted in respect of origin between the Israelitish religion and other religions. The religion of Israel is one of those religions; nothing less, but also nothing more." "This, then, quite unambiguously stated," says Professor Orr, "is the issue to which the religion of Israel—and with it Christianity, for in this connection the two very much stand or fall together—is brought at the present day." To treat the Bible critically is to bring it down to the level of ordinary human books. Dr. Orr says truly: "There is no gainsaying the fact that, historically, it was in rationalistic workshops mainly that the critical theory was elaborated, and that, from this circumstance, a certain rationalistic impress was stamped upon it from the first." It is admitted by the *Christian Commonwealth* that "it is this theory which, chiefly through the brilliant advocacy of Wellhausen, has for the time won an all but universal recognition on the Continent and in English-speaking critical circles." Dr. Orr rejects this critical theory on the ground that it "breaks down the Biblical narratives, disintegrates them, causes them to crumble to pieces." All criticism is of necessity rationalistic, and Rationalism is a denial of all supernatural revelation.

Any stick is good enough to beat a Sceptic with. Professor Haeckel is represented as a dawdling old man of eighty who has lost touch with the dominant ideas of the present. As a matter of fact, the illustrious scientist is only seventy years of age, and still continues in unabated mental vigor. His mental vision is exceptionally clear and distinct, and these last lectures prove beyond a doubt that he can read the signs of the times with undiminished accuracy. It is Mr. Bray who does not perceive the real trend of modern thought. To assert that theology has completely shifted its ground during the last fifty years is to make a most revolutionary concession to Freethought. Freethinkers have been making the same assertion all the time, only with the difference that in the mighty changes which theology has recently undergone they perceive an unmistakable sign that theology itself is slowly passing away. As is well known, theology was erected on the sure foundation of "Thus saith the Lord." Both the Prophet of the Old Testament and the Apostle of the New claimed to be God's spokesmen. What came from them was not opinion or theory but eternal truth. They were entrusted with the oracles of God. All the doctrines of the Bible are presented as revealed truths. There-

fore if theology submits to modifications suggested by Science it is an indication that theology is of purely human origin and as full of mistakes as any other human product. But if theology is the work of man so is the Bible; and if the Bible is of human origin and full of mistakes, so is Christianity; and if Christianity is a man-made religion it must take its place among the other religions as one of them.

When will Christian apologists perceive and admit this? When will they realise that there is no middle ground between belief in Christianity as a supernaturally revealed and absolutely perfect religion and the adoption of the Freethought position? It is not so easy, after all, to get rid of the fig-leaves and "the grand old gardener and his wife." They are in the Bible, and to reject them is to reject the Bible. To Paul, Adam and Christ were equally historical persons; and the mission of the latter was to repair the damages caused by the former. Through the one the human race was utterly ruined while through the other it may be redeemed. Now, does it not follow that Adam and Christ stand or fall together? Progressive theology cuts off the feet from under itself. It has thrown Adam over-board because Science has shown that he is utterly impossible; but it still clings to Christ after stripping him of all his ancient attributes. Hence we do not hesitate to affirm that progressive theology is a virtual denial of Christianity. Realising the truth of this orthodoxy is making a desperate effort to regain lost ground, and to drive the compromisers out of the field. Shall success crown the attempt? No; because all beliefs which cannot justify themselves at the bar of ever growing knowledge are doomed.

J. T. LLOYD.

Dr. Clifford and the Labor Party.

If it be true that appetite grows by what it feeds on, there is little difficulty in diagnosing the causes of the present condition of Dr. Clifford. To go on repeating the same thing year after year tends in any case to produce, not exactly a conviction, but rather a feeling that the statement made is true. One becomes hypnotised by the frequent recurrence of one's own statement. And when to this there is added an abnormal capacity for misstating an opponent's case, a readiness to run away from a plain, though awkward, question, and the assumption that "my" cause is the moral cause, and that of all others more or less immoral, there is induced a feeling of self-satisfaction quite fatal to anything in the shape of wholesome correction. And Dr. Clifford's natural tendencies in this direction have been so intensified by the fuge men of the religious press, that to expect that he will ever face a question connected with religious dissent with anything like straightforwardness is to anticipate a miracle—and miracles do not occur.

In a recent number of the *Freethinker* I called attention to some remarks of the Rev. Silvester Horne on the results of the general election. On the present occasion I wish to note a somewhat similar line taken by Dr. Clifford, and which is worth noting as a study of that gentleman's dialectical methods. Dr. Clifford writes in the *Christian World* for Feb. 15, an article on *The Free Churches and Labor*, the implication of which is that the Free Church is the Labor Church, and the working class, as a whole, is devoted to the group of religious organisations that pass under that title. The motive for making out such a claim is exactly the motive for similar statements made by Church of England preachers. The return of a little over half a hundred labor members to the House of Commons has provided religious trimmers of all sects something to angle for, although there is little doubt that if at the next election the labor candidates were annihilated, nothing more would be heard of either the Free Churches or the Established Church as the Churches of Labor. Nothing of this kind ever was heard until Labor became politically important, and

its manifestations may be safely taken as an indication of the varying importance of Labor in the political world.

Dr. Clifford bases his claim "We are the Labor Church of England," on a statement that is eminently characteristic. Four-fifths of their members, he says, belongs to the wage earning classes. If Dr. Clifford means by this phrase what is ordinarily meant by "working classes," excluding, that is, shopkeepers who employ assistants, small employers and the like, one would like some stronger proof of its truth than his bare word. But even though it were quite true, it would prove nothing. For the point is not what proportion of the members of the Free Churches belong to the working class, but what proportion these bear to the whole of the working class of the country. The three tailors of Tooley-street were *all* working men, but they were not taken as constituting the English working class. If Dr. Clifford means that the working classes as a whole are with the Free Churches, then the statement is simply and demonstrably false. For it is not true, as is implied, that the Church of England is filled with Aristocrats and land-owners. That too has a very large proportion of its actual members among the working classes—certainly a larger gross number than the Free Churches. While with the Catholic Church one would expect this to be true in even a greater measure. Either of these bodies have as much right as Dr. Clifford to claim to be the "Labor Church of England." More right, for, as I have before pointed out, the fact that dissenters have been strongest among the mercantile class has made wealthy dissenters far more inimical to the direct interests of artisans than wealthy Episcopalians. In a similar article, written for *Reynold's*, Dr. Clifford is careful to leave out the sentence "We are the Labor Church of England." The reason is obvious. He could trust the editor of the *Christian World* not to insert disclaimers from Labor leaders. In *Reynold's* the falsehood would have been quickly exposed.

When Dr. Clifford is dealing with the Education Question, his policy is to refuse to recognise some facts and to misrepresent others. He follows the same policy here. He ignores the direct statements of the London Trades Council repudiating any alliance with the Dissenters, the statement of an important organ like the *Amalgamated Engineer's Journal* preferring Churchmen to Nonconformists, he ignores the fact that a number of the Labor members are either avowed Freethinkers, or next door to it, that a large number of the Labor leaders are Unbelievers, and declares his Church to be the Labor Church, with the implication that it really represents the opinions of the organised labor of the country. And this is the man who is lecturing the country at large upon the rights of Conscience and general Morality! The *Church Times* may not possess the delicately nurtured conscience of Dr. Clifford, but it is sane enough to recognise facts and to admit "the fact, the visible, urgent, undeniable fact, that the working classes as a whole are separated from the practice of the Christian religion." And a brother preacher, a Dissenter, declared that the Dissenting Churches were in the main middle class institutions, run by the middle classes, for the middle classes, and in the interests of the middle classes. But Mr. Rattenbury is a young man. By the time he is as old as Dr. Clifford, the Nonconformist Conscience will doubtless have taught him to speak differently—even though less truthfully.

One has very little hope of Dr. Clifford ever answering a straightforward question, but at a venture I would ask him, What have the Free Churches ever done for labor in the past? And what are they doing now—except talk? I do not want the names of individuals here and there, or mere vague professions, but definite facts. And does he really wish his readers to believe that the average Dissenting chapel, ruled as it is by the petty tradesman or small manufacturer—when it is not ruled by a large one—is a genuine labor organisation? Surely he cannot really believe his readers to be quite so credulous as

this. While I write there lies before me the notice of an article by an American clergyman—neither an Episcopalian nor a Catholic, the Rev. W. D. P. Bliss—who says of the Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist bodies in the States that "Evangelicism has quenched the social gospel," and that the Baptists, Dr. Clifford's own denomination, founds its Church less on the rock than on Mr. Rockefeller. And, finally, if Dr. Clifford really believes that "the Labor Movement devotes itself, first of all, to the immediate application of the principles of the Gospel of Christ to political and social life," will he tell us where is the Labor Movement in England, worth talking about, that declares that to be its principal object, and what are the principles it seeks to apply? The news will be surprising to most, and the search should keep Dr. Clifford busy for a few months.

Dr. Clifford is at his best (or worst) when dealing with the Education question. Here he seeks to show the identity of the aims of Labor and the Free Churches by selecting the statement of Mr. Philip Snowden—misrepresenting him at that—and contrasting it with the resolution passed by the National Council of the Free Churches in 1904. Mr. Snowden had said that Compromise had been the curse of national education. We should have to get down to bedrock principles and go in for Secular education. But Mr. Snowden went on to say that this did not involve the expulsion of the Bible. That might still remain. This, says Dr. Clifford, would satisfy nine-tenths of the Free Churchmen. Now it hardly needs pointing out that keeping the Bible in the school in Mr. Snowden's sense and in Dr. Clifford's sense is quite two different things, and Dr. Clifford is well aware of the fact. Dr. Clifford and the Free Churches are prepared to ask for prayers, hymns, simple religious instruction, and Bible reading. Nay, Mr. Meyer, a brother preacher, announces that they have the request for this *in type*. Yet we have the hypocritical pretence that all that is asked for is Secular education with the Bible retained as an ordinary book.

But the hypocrisy does not end at this. Why does Dr. Clifford select Mr. Snowden as representing Labor? There is the Trades Union Congress, representing the organised labor of Great Britain. Why not take that? Well, because Dr. Clifford knows that this body passed a resolution calling for Secular education in its legitimate and honest sense. He must know quite as well that one Labor body has actually appointed a committee for the purpose of promoting a measure for the passing of a Secular Education Act, and that a number of the Labor members have definitely promised to support such a measure. Yet on the strength of a distorted sentence from one Labor leader he asserts that the attitude of the Labor party and the Free Churches is identical. It is really difficult to write temperately of a man who follows such a course as this. Five minutes' quiet conversation with him would do much more to relieve one's feelings. One can only say that downright dishonesty could hardly go further—even with the Nonconformist Conscience. As it is, the falsity of Dr. Clifford's statement is answered by the Labor Representation Committee which, on February 17, passed a resolution calling for Secular Education in the State schools.

Of course, Dr. Clifford's object is tolerably plain. He is, in plain words, trying to bribe the Labor party into co-operation with the Dissenters. The interest of Dissenters in education is, as one of their own leading men confessed, primarily religious—that is, sectarian. And their interest in every question may be measured by the same rule. Just as they denounced or ignored the Temperance movement in the early part of the nineteenth century, and now pose as though it had always been part and parcel of the Free Church teaching, so they are trying the same game with Labor. Dr. Clifford is practically saying, Help us to secure our object of getting a form of religion that suits Nonconformists taught at the public expense, and we will help you with your objects—by professing a desire to sweeten the lives

of people, to remedy injustice, and to make the nation morally and spiritually healthier. But the Labor leaders are not likely to be led away by any such empty phrases. They are protesting now, and with good reason, that whether a man calls himself Liberal or Conservative is but the difference 'twixt tweedledum and tweedledee. And they will surely be keen enough to see that whether a man belongs to Church or Chapel is just about as important. A money-grabber is as comfortable in a Chapel as in a Church. A sweater is as much influenced by the sermons of Dr. Clifford as by those of the Bishop of London. Neither Episcopalianism nor Dissent can claim a monopoly of rack-renting landlords, sweating employers, or money-grabbing pietists. They are pretty equally distributed between the two. In the long run the Churches and Chapels will play the game of the vested interests; and of the two bodies the man with the purse exercises a far more despotic interest in the "Free" Chapel than in the Established Church.

C. COHEN.

The Atheist Shoemaker.—III.

XI.

I SHALL have to return to Miss Hughes's account of the Atheist Shoemaker presently, and it will be my painful duty to show that she is grossly ignorant of facts which she should have made herself acquainted with, or that she wilfully misrepresents them. But in order to do this effectually the facts must be put within my readers' possession.

Mr. Hughes stated that he had given fictitious names to the characters in his romantic narrative because he judged "that the relatives of the deceased and other people interested would not care to have their names in print." This statement is reproduced by his daughter as a sufficient reason for the mystification. But it was essentially an untrue statement, and Miss Hughes ought to be aware of it. The truth is that her father never took the trouble to see or communicate with his astonishing "convert's" relatives. He had absolutely no ground for saying that they shunned publicity. The wish was father to the thought. It was the reverend gentleman himself who dreaded the daylight.

"John Herbert's" relatives lived at Northampton. His father went to one of Mr. Hughes's meetings there and said he wished to speak with him on the subject of the book he had written, as there were many mistakes in it. Mr. Hughes replied that he was in a hurry. He gave the father his card, and said "Call on me." As if a working shoemaker could run up from Northampton and pay calls in London!

Mr. Hughes should have written to "John Herbert's" father on being told that were many mistakes in the Atheist Shoemaker story. He should have ascertained the facts and made the necessary corrections. But he did nothing. Perhaps he thought the little storm would soon blow over. Perhaps he trusted to the religious partisanship of the father, who was a fellow Methodist. If this was his hope he was mistaken. The father was an honest man. He had got hold of Mr. Holyoake's report and my pamphlet. He saw his duty clear, and he did it. He wrote to me.

"Now," I thought on receiving that letter, "we shall have a *real* investigation." I hurried down to Northampton, and found my correspondent living in a poor (but tidy) house in a poor street. His wife was with him, and his two sons. These were all the immediate relatives. They were all Christians, but they felt it was time for the truth to be heard. The father was not only a devout Christian, he had conducted a Methodist mission at Northampton. His dead son, like the living ones, had always been a Christian. The idea of his having been an advocate of Atheism was an absurdity. His real name was **Charles Alfred Gibson**.

XII.

I asked the Gibsons if they could come up to London, and go with me to the Hall of Science on the Sunday evening, and contradict Mr. Hughes's principal statements before a public meeting, in the presence of reporters. They said they would. Accordingly I brought them up. I paid their railway fare, found them food and lodgings during the two days they stayed in London, and paid their fare back, with compensation for the loss of two days' work. Not a penny more. So they made no "profit" out of it, as less honorable Christians suggested.

The Hall of Science was densely packed on Sunday evening, February 4, 1894. Some fifteen hundred people were present, and reports of the meeting appeared in the London papers the next morning.

Half way through my own speech I paused to let Mr. Gibson senior give his own testimony. He said that he was there as a Christian man in the interest of truth, and he branded the Atheist Shoemaker story as a "damnable lie."

What followed must be prefaced with a few words of explanation. Mr. Hughes had not been satisfied with the conversion of the Atheist Shoemaker. The Atheist Shoemaker had an Atheist brother at Northampton, and the conversion (and death) of the Atheist Shoemaker had led to the conversion of the Atheist brother. This brother must have been Mr. Stephen Henry Gibson; indeed there was documentary evidence to show that he was the person intended.

Mr. Gibson senior having given Mr. Hughes the lie direct, I asked Mr. Stephen Henry Gibson to stand up and answer my questions—which I reproduce with his replies:—

"Were you ever an Atheist?"

"Never."

"Have you ever been anything but a professed Christian?"

"Never."

"Have you ever had any communication with the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes or the Sisters of the West London Mission?"

"Never."

So much for the "Atheist brother" who was converted by the "seraphic death" of the Atheist Shoemaker.

The person responsible for that little story was probably "Julia," the Irish wife of Charles Alfred Gibson, who bamboozled the Sisters, who bamboozled Mr. Hughes, who bamboozled the public. There is a lot to be said about "Julia" but I would rather not say it. I gave Mr. Hughes a broad hint about her veracity, but he was above taking it—and so much the worse for him.

"Julia" got back to Northampton after "John Herbert's" death, and when the Gibsons asked her how Mr. Hughes came to tell such falsehoods about her husband, she said: "Oh, they make it up as they like." She understood them. And they might have been spared much humiliation if they had understood her.

XIII.

Mr. Holyoake, being plainly heckled at a public meeting, had to admit that "Gibson" was the name disclosed to him as that of the Atheist Shoemaker. Mr. Hughes, interviewed by a representative of the *Morning* (February 10, 1894), said: "Oh, yes, it was Mr. Gibson's son undoubtedly who was the subject of my book." I was evidently on the right track.

Miss Hughes is as silent as the grave about all these things. She comes to a dead stop after Mr. Holyoake's report. Mr. Hughes skulked behind that report all the remaining days of his life. Miss Hughes makes him skulk behind it in death.

Not a word does Miss Hughes print about *my* investigation, and what I discovered. Not a word does she print about the public denials of the Atheist Shoemaker's relatives. And in this she shows herself her father's daughter. For not a word about these things did he permit to appear in the *Methodist Times*.

How differently did I act! I do not say this boastfully. I merely did what Freethinkers in my position have always done. I gave both sides. I printed Mr. Holyoake's report in the *Freethinker*; I printed a long and hot-tempered letter from him when the whitewashing game was over; and I printed all that Mr. Hughes said in his own defence, reproducing it from the *Methodist Times* and elsewhere; so that *my* readers, at any rate, might have all the materials for an independent judgment.

On the face of it I acted honestly. On the face of it Mr. Hughes acted dishonestly. On the face of it his daughter acts dishonestly still. Unless—which I can hardly believe—she was herself a victim of the deception he practised upon the readers of the *Methodist Times*.

XIV.

I will now deal specifically with Charles Alfred Gibson. Nearly everything that Mr. Hughes wrote about him as "John Herbert" was untrue. He was born on May 14, 1861. I saw the date in the family Bible. He died on March 27, 1889—not quite twenty-eight years of age. His death took place at Sidmouth, in Devonshire, and he was buried there. He perished of heart disease and consumption.

Mr. Hughes, like other novelists, went in for life-like details. He said that "John Herbert" taught himself to read by spelling out the names at the street-corners. This was false. He had a reasonably good education. He was at school all the five years the family lived in America. Mr. Hughes said that "John Herbert" suffered privations which ruined his constitution. This also was false. Mr. Gibson senior, a sober, industrious working man, had always been able to support his family decently. Miss Hughes, however, does not hesitate to repeat the "privations" fiction. "For many years," she says, "he had been half-starved, and he died before his time because of it." We beg to tell her that this is utterly untrue. The heart trouble that Charles Alfred Gibson suffered from ran more or less through the family. It was simply a case of hereditary weakness.

But there is no need, at this time of day, to pursue the author of the Atheist Shoemaker story through all his imaginary episodes. The one great point is this: Was the Atheist Shoemaker ever an Atheist at all, much less an eloquent and popular advocate of Atheism? On this point the evidence is clear and decisive.

There is the evidence of his family, the evidence of chronology, the evidence of the landlady of the house in which he lived in London before going down to Devonshire to die, and the evidence of his shoemaking shopmates, whom I was lucky enough to discover.

Mr. Hughes represented "John Herbert" as having always been an Atheist, and as having been brought to Christ for the first time through the West London Mission. But he came from the bosom of a Christian family, and had always been a Christian. While serving in the Fifth Lancers, in Ireland, under the assumed name of Cartwright, he made the acquaintance of "Julia," whom he afterwards married in England. At St. Albans, where he worked at his trade, he and Julia were both in the Salvation Army. Subsequently he was in the Salvation Army at Camberwell. His father once heard him speak in the Camberwell "barracks," and was greatly surprised at some of the things he said. When he last left his father's house at Northampton he knelt down and prayed in the passage. During the eighteen months of his residence in London, before going to Devonshire, his father lost sight of him. He did not write home even after his alleged "conversion." It was Julia who wrote when he was dying at Sidmouth.

Charles Alfred Gibson was no "orator" before that last eighteen months, neither was he an Atheist, nor anything else but a Christian. Thus the period of his Atheism, if he ever was an Atheist, is narrowed down to the final year and a half.

During the latter part of that period he worked at Ford's, in the Grays Inn-road, and I went there with the Gibsons while they were in London. It was on Monday morning, February 5, 1894. We were introduced by Mr. Frank Trasler, a member of the National Secular Society, who had worked there with Charles Alfred Gibson, and was working there still. The men laughed when I read to them what Mr. Hughes said about the shop in his book. Gibson's shopmates remembered him well. He had worked with them about twelve months. Before that he had worked at Lilley and Skinner's, Paddington-green, and he was then in the Church Army. Within twelve months of his conversion from Atheism, and Atheistic propaganda, by Mr. Hughes! The thing was really *too* absurd.

Mr. Gibson senior asked them if they ever knew his son to be a lecturer. They all answered, "No." He asked them if they ever knew his son to be an Atheist. Again they answered, "No." They added that he was talkative, and fond of arguing, in which he shifted about a good deal; but never to their knowledge was he an unbeliever, and he was always hostile to Atheism in his conversation.

XV.

One of Charles Alfred Gibson's old shopmates mentioned that he had lived not far off in the Caledonian-road. He also managed to fish up the number from the depths of his memory. This was an utterly unexpected windfall. The Gibsons and I were soon on our way to interview the landlady of that house; for somehow or other these houses always have landladies.

Mr. Hughes had given a long account of his visit to the house in Islington where the Atheist Shoemaker was dying. He went there to administer the sacrament to his "convert"—taking with him for the purpose "the little Communion Service case which the ladies of Leeds gave to my sainted father-in-law, Alfred Barrett, forty-six years ago." "John Herbert's" large collection of Atheist literature had been taken off the shelves and put under the sofa. "He inclined to burn them," but he refrained, and Mr. Hughes forgot to buy them at a cheap rate, in order to exhibit them as a trophy. The landlady told us that young Gibson had very few books, and what he had were mostly borrowed; and it may be that Mr. Hughes's eye of faith was in an excited and magnifying condition. Certainly he romanced about the narrow stairs and the miserable room. My own eyes assured me of that.

Charles Alfred Gibson and his wife lodged in the top front room from July 1888 to January 1889. This was proved by the rent book. Having no children, and only the rent of that one furnished room to pay for, they must have had enough to subsist on while he was able to work. And here again Mr. Hughes's harrowing story of destitution was untrue.

The landlady remembered Mr. Hughes's visit quite well. She remembered the Sisters too, and spoke highly of their kindness, which I never thought of disputing. I did not tell her who I was. The Gibsons simply introduced me as a friend of theirs, and I allowed them to do nearly all the talking. She told them that young Gibson was vexed with professed Christianity because no one had called on his wife when she was ill. She never heard of his having been an Atheist. She said that "he always believed in God." Had she ever heard of his lecturing? "No, he didn't lecture." She smiled at the idea as an absurdity.

We left the house without telling her the real object of our visit. She thought she had received a friendly visit from the relatives of her former lodger. She spoke with perfect straightforwardness, and there was no reason in the world why she should tell us anything but the truth.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

We referred last week to the announcement of a Plumpstead prayer-meeting, its object being to wrestle with the Lord for the conversion of Mr. Robert Blatchford. We have since seen that the said prayer-meeting was duly held. Some six hundred men and women—probably with good hearts, and certainly with poor heads—assembled in the Wesleyan Central Hall, and were addressed by the Rev. Stanley Parker, who lamented that Mr. Robert Blatchford, by his attacks on Christianity, had carried a lot of working men “from the light of the Gospel to the darkness of infidelity.” The reverend gentleman hoped that “Divine illumination would come to this man, and that he would become a glorious worker for Christ.” Let him hope. This is a free country—at least for that sort of thing.

When the “divine illumination” came to Paul it knocked him silly for some three days. After that he became “a glorious worker for Christ.” We suppose Mr. Blatchford will have to be knocked silly too before he will be fit for the same job.

One old man in that prayer-meeting was evidently a venerable simpleton. He said he was sure that “their humble petition would be answered.” This prophetic utterance was greeted with loud “Amens” and “Hallelujahs.” They felt that Mr. Blatchford was safe. And we believe he is.

President Roosevelt is a bit of a “bounder.” It was he who called Thomas Paine a “dirty little Atheist.” Thomas Paine was not dirty, he was not an Atheist, and he was some inches taller than President Roosevelt. This has been pointed out to the “Christian Statesman,” but he is too proud (or is he too mean?) to correct a blunder which only affects the reputation of an “infidel,” and he assumes the attitude of “What I have said I have said”—which is specially adopted by gods and fools.

We are not astonished to see a little of the paternal strain in President Roosevelt's daughter. She rehearsed her wedding two days before it took place at the White House, and the important news was wired to London that “the rehearsal was an entire success.” It is to the credit of that trivial item, the bridegroom, that he declined to take his part in the foolish and ill-conditioned performance.

Miss Alice Roosevelt, like her father, is a good Christian. Her marriage with Mr. Longworth was “solemnised” by Bishop Satterlee. This fact is a sufficient guarantee of her piety. And we are very glad, for our part, to know that she is a Christian. We should have felt humiliated if a Freethinker had treated so grave a thing as a marriage like a cheap popular farce.

Orangemen in Australia intend to take an active part in the Federal elections, and will put the following question to the candidates: “Are you in favor of the principle of Socialism which denies God and means disloyalty to the King and throne?” What will the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam and the rest of the Christian Socialists say to this? In this country Socialism denies the Capitalist; over in Australia, if we are to believe the Orangemen (which, by the way, we don't), it denies God. Perhaps the question is an echo of the Blatchford boom.

Mr. Watson, the Labor leader, being interviewed on the subject, said that the question was ridiculous. Australian Socialism was more compatible with Christianity than the competitive system, and its principle was assented to by many distinguished clergymen. That is what Socialist Watson says at the antipodes. Socialist Blatchford says the very opposite in England. We leave the Socialists to settle the difference amongst themselves.

Rev. R. H. Moule, vicar of Bozeat and Strixton, Northamptonshire, whose clothes were found on the banks of the Ouse, near Ely, last summer, is not supposed to have been drowned after all. He is said to have been seen in Paris. Others say that he has gone to Canada. Mrs. Moule's relatives entertain little doubt that he is still alive. The case has given the Bishop of Peterborough much anxiety, and a citation to appear has been served at Parson Moule's address—or what was his address before he took a trip down the Ouse, or elsewhere. Altogether it would be a very odd affair, if one did not remember how clericals often get “mixed.”

Seraphic doctors of divinity in the Middle Ages used to argue how many angels could dance on the point of a needle. We never heard that the problem was settled. Dr. Somerville, of Hastings, however, the eminent bacteriologist, has settled a similar point in arithmetic. The dust on a pin point yielded no less than 3,000 colonies of living germs, and most of them malignant. One sees now what “Providence” is up to for our benefit.

Father Bernard Vaughan seems to be an excellent comedian. His letter to the *Times* in reply to the Bishop of London, with respect to the “conversion” of Princess Ena of Battenberg, is a fine piece of professional fooling. He must have had a lot of practice before he could talk so gravely with his tongue in his cheek all the time. The view he takes is that the Princess is not going to become a Catholic in order to marry King Alphonso. Oh dear no! It may be that “a desirable marriage” has “awakened her interest in the claims of the Catholic Church,” but this “gives no excuse to anyone for saying, that the ultimate submission to the Church's authority, should it come about, will be based upon no better argument than the initial motive which first drew serious attention to its teaching.” Besides, the British public may rest assured that “it will be the sacred duty of the authorities of the Church to have her solemn assurance that her present conscientious convictions oblige her to take the step.” It would not be easy to better that. We present our congratulations to Father Vaughan. He is a past master in the arts of—priestcraft.

When the Protestant champion, Henry of Navarre, turned Catholic in order to gain the throne of France, the Church took his solemn assurance of “conscientious conviction”—and both sides knew precisely what it was worth. *Paris vaut bien une messe*, Henry said—“Paris is well worth a mass.” He paid the price, and the Church took it. That was all.

Freethinkers like Jeremy Bentham denounced and ridiculed oath-taking, and Charles Bradlaugh the Atheist carried a Bill in the House of Commons allowing “infidels” to affirm and permitting Christians to obey Christ by doing ditto. When the Bradlaugh question was before the House in the eighties one honest member called attention to the disorderly and impious way in which crowds of honorable gentlemen took the oath at the table. That honest member was howled down, but the sentiment he expressed has grown since then. Even a paper like the *Daily Chronicle* has come to share it. We take the following from its parliamentary notes:—

“The spectacle of Members pushing and crowding for hours to be sworn suggests once more the impropriety of the whole ceremony. Any oath of allegiance to the Sovereign is wholly unnecessary, for the common law of the land lays this obligation upon every citizen. It is obviously undignified, as a glance at the proceedings shows. It is irreligious, for there can be no reverence or solemnity in taking the name of the Deity under such conditions. And when an act is at the same time unnecessary, undignified, and irreligious, it had better be abandoned.”

The *Chronicle* suggests that if the oath cannot be abolished the whole House should stand up and swear or affirm together. This reminds us of the Bishop who married a dozen couples, all accidentally mixed up, and then said “Sort yourselves.”

The worst of human faults is meanness. There is nothing to be said for it. It excites and deserves unmitigated contempt and disgust. Yet this very vice is being perpetrated at present in the name of England. It is enough to make one sick to read how the Aliens Act is being used to destroy the old right of asylum which this nation claimed to exercise—and *did* exercise—against the despotisms of the world. Russian refugees, creeping from death and torture, in the land of the Czar, the Cossack, and the Knout, are actually being sent back to the bloody tyranny they escaped from because they have not the necessary number of pounds sterling in their pockets. England had better spend money like water than do this sort of thing. Money goes and is forgotten, but dishonor and self-contempt poison the memory. A pitched battle, with the loss of twenty thousand lives, would be better for us than sending back one revolutionist to the tender mercies of the pious scoundrels who are governing Holy Russia—from the double-damned coward of a Czar trembling in his prison-place to the lowest blood-drunken brute who has just cut the throat of a Jew. Death is not so dreadful a thing; we have all got to face it some day; the really dreadful thing is to live disgraced. And this country—including every man and woman in it—is being disgraced by what, for the first time in history, is now done in its name.

Let no one say that this is politics—and therefore out of

place in the *Freethinker*. It is not politics at all. It is common morality and common decency.

We cannot but call to mind the "Appeal" of an Atheistic and Republican poet written some thirty-eight years ago. You may read it towards the end of Swinburne's *Songs Before Sunrise*. The verses are still memorable in which he praised England for her right of asylum:—

"A praise so sweet in our ears,
That thou in the tempest of things
As a rock for a refuge shouldst stand,
In the blood-red river of tears
Poured forth for the triumph of kings;
A safeguard, a sheltering land,
In the thunder and torrent of years.

Strangers came gladly to thee,
Exiles, chosen of men,
Safe for thy sake in thy shade,
Sat down at thy feet and were free."

Now the "exiles" and even "the chosen of men" must show the necessary five pounds or be thrust back to hell. Mazzini himself—if this Aliens Act had existed fifty years ago—might have been hustled away from our shores because of his want of cash. Damn the cash! The very thought of it is enough to make one vomit.

The late Archbishop Temple, in his younger days, before he climbed so high in the Church, recognised the "dreadful worldliness" of the clergy. "This," he said, "is not confined to individuals; the whole body of the clergy seem infected with it; they all seem to look forward to a comfortable parsonage, a quiet easy life, few cares, and, in fact, a happiness which, though religion assists in the formation of, is very much a worldly one."

King Edward has had another interview with the Rev. Prebendary Carlile, head of the Church Army. His Majesty hopes the Church Army, which "is so well worthy of our confidence," will "press forward in the cause of the poorest." Of course the King means well; it would be ill-natured to suppose otherwise; but he would show more statesmanship in leaving religious philanthropies alone—for they are all based on false economics and labor sweating. His Majesty would do infinitely more good by helping along the policy of Old Age Pensions for the workers. He is mistaken in supposing that the working classes want large doses of "Christian charity." They are sick of it. What they want is more justice.

The Yarmouth Board of Guardians, in spite of representations from the Local Government Board, adhere to their determination not to pay a man of God for looking after the souls of the inmates of the workhouse. They refuse to appoint a new chaplain, and declare that the religious wants of the paupers should be attended to by voluntary effort. It remains to be seen whether the men of God who live in the borough will visit these poor spiritual patients gratuitously.

The first performance of a series of revivals of classical comedies commenced on Saturday last at the Waldorf Theatre with Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. This is not the place to enter into any detailed criticism of the performance; but one piece of criticism may be passed. Tony Lumpkin's song at the "Three Pigeons" consists of three verses, the middle one of which runs:—

"When Methodist Preachers come down,
A-preaching that drinking is sinful,
I'll wager the rascals a crown
They always preach best with a skinful.
But when you come down with your pence,
For a slice of their scurvy religion,
I'll leave it to all men of sense
But you, my good friend, are the pigeon."

For reasons not very hard to discover the management has seen fit to cut out this verse altogether. It is, of course, legitimate, to "cut" plays for reasons of length; but this could not have been the motive in this instance, as several twentieth century clownish additions were made to the text. It was enough to make poor old Noll turn in his grave, but a few paces away, to feel that his play had to be bowdlerised in the interests of current Christian prudery. And the additions! Well, they are an insult. We imagine that the Waldorf is never likely to have at any time many people about the premises who can add to *She Stoops to Conquer* with anything like profit to the play.

The *Plymouth Co-operative Record*, in its obituary notice of the late George Jacob Holyoake, contributes its quota of nonsense to the fictitious history of his connection with

Secularism. After referring to his early days of heresy in terms which imply that he was the founder of the National Secular Society (which he was not, for it was founded by Bradlaugh), our Western contemporary proceeds as follows:—

"But the founder did not retain the leadership for long. The organisation became divided into three parties, and Atheism, which had a strong following, but was not accepted by Mr. Holyoake, brought about his retirement."

Absurdity is deathless, and falsehood is perennial. Statements like the foregoing will circulate, and find believers, till the day of judgment. Still, as a matter of fact, Holyoake was as much an Atheist as Bradlaugh was. On the other hand, there never was any declaration of Atheism in the principles of the National Secular Society. So that our Western contemporary is wrong every way.

"Kismct" appears to be as popular in a certain part of England as it is in any Mohammedan country. The medical officer of the Gainsborough Rural District Council, reporting on an outbreak of typhoid in Trentside villages, says that the people have disregarded his warnings against drinking water taken direct from the Trent. They replied that they had drunk the water all their lives; their impression was that the Almighty sent typhoid and all such things, and that precautions on their part were useless. Another instance of the beneficial influence of religion!

The Bishop of London is still going strong on the subject of the poverty of the Church clergy. The other day he addressed a meeting on their behalf at the Duchess of Somerset's house. There was apparently a meagre attendance, for the Duchess is reported to have said that "if she had arranged for the attendance of a clown or a conjurer or a ventriloquist, the room would have been filled." It does not seem to have occurred to her that people may be sick of hearing about the sufferings of the "poor clergy," while millions of laymen are often in actual want.

The Llandudno golf links are laid on land owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who stipulate in the lease that there must be no play on Sundays. Girl caddies are employed on these links, and many people raise an objection to their being so—and on the face of it the employment seems unsuitable to their sex and age. In view of this objection the golfers offered to do away with girl caddies if the Sunday clause were removed from their lease. But the Commissioners thought more of the blessed Sabbath than of the future of these girls, and the clause still stands.

A *Daily News* reviewer of the Rev. Frank Ballard's portentous book replying to Haeckel says that people with "scant store of brains in their heads" will find the great German's writings very much to their taste. On reading the review to the end we found ourselves face to face with a conundrum. Why does the reviewer dislike Haeckel? We give it up.

Rev. A. W. Jephson, of Walworth, says that ethical teaching can never be a substitute for religion. But why does he think it necessary to publish his opinion in the newspapers? Everybody would expect him to entertain it. Religious preachers are no more likely to give morality the first place than saddlers are to recommend stone in preference to leather. When we know a man's trade we can guess his opinion on certain subjects.

Dr. Clifford has had another old teapot, or something, sold to pay his Education rate with. It is quite exhilarating to watch him keeping out of prison so dexterously while strenuously advising his co-religionists to step inside. Passive Resisters have suffered 182 imprisonments in all (the figures being made up to February 17, and taken from the *Daily News*). Two have been imprisoned six times = 12; three five times = 15; eight four times = 32; seventeen thrice = 51; forty-six twice = 92; fifty-six once = 56. Still more interesting figures would have been the lengths of these imprisonments. The longest could not be great; the shortest would be less than a day. Probably the whole lot together would not much (if at all) exceed the three sentences passed upon Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp, in 1883, for the fictitious crime of "blasphemy" in respect of one number of the *Freethinker*. So much for modern Non-conformist "martyrdom."

How the clergy fear Secular Education! And they see it is coming. This is true even in Scotland. There is a long letter in the *Glasgow Herald* by the Rev. Duncan Macgregor, Principal of Dunoon College, on "National Education," in which he says that: "Whether we like it or not, the probable solution of the Education trouble will be secular educa-

tion pure and simple." What is to be done, then, by those who "are convinced that religion must be at the foundation of morality"? They must devote their attention to training colleges, and see that the teachers are turned out with a sufficient supply of "godliness." This, in spite of Secular Education, they will impart to the children, and, heh presto! the trick is done. Such is the bold Macgregor's advice, and it is not bad for the present. It shows he is a pawky Scotchman. But he may depend upon it that the State will have to deal, sooner or later, with the question of the training colleges; and when that hour arrives the bold Macgregor's policy will fizzle out.

Rev. Dr. Lawrence, preaching last Sunday at the Chapel Royal, Savoy, propounded a short and easy way of dealing with the Education question. "He would have a small body of competent divines nominated by the Archbishop of Canterbury," he said, "to meet a similar body nominated by the Free Church Council, and co-operate with them in drawing up a scheme of instruction in Bible history and Christian morality for use in the schools. The State would then accept it as the best means available of making good citizens, and decree that it should be taught to all children whose parents made no objection on conscientious grounds." How delightfully simple! Catholics, Jews, Secularists, Rationalists, and Agnostics don't count at all. Their money is used, of course; the Christians can never do without that; but in no other way is their citizenship to be recognised.

In ordinary life what the Rev. Dr. Lawrence proposes is called thieving. In religious life it is called Christian morality. Which is another illustration of how circumstances alter cases.

House of Commons committee rooms are being put to a new use. The day after the opening of parliament a meeting of Nonconformist Members was held in one of the committee rooms, under the presidency of Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., with Mr. Horace Mansfield, M.P., acting as secretary. There are over two hundred Nonconformists in the House, and they are going to meet from time to time as Nonconformists. And a pretty state of things it will be if the Church, Catholic, and "infidel" members follow suit. In the course of time the old distinctions of Conservative, Liberal, Radical, and Labor might disappear. Then we should see the Christian brotherhood of man realised. The brotherhood of Cain and Abel.

"A Father of Six" got the following neat little letter on "The Religious Difficulty" into the *Daily News*:—

"Sir,—Where does the difficulty exist? With the teachers? No, for they make no demands. With the parents of the children? No, we have heard nothing from them. Where, then, does it exist? As far as I can see, it exists only in the minds of clerics. The clerics are doubtless perfectly honest, but it is strange that all the pother comes only from them."

We have been saying this all along in the *Freethinker*. There is no evidence that the parents care twopence about the quarrel over religious education. The whole thing is got up by the men of God.

A man escaped from the imbecile ward of Great Yarmouth workhouse, and got into St. Margaret's Church, Fleggburgh, where he made a fire, burning the altar cloth, books, and other articles. One would like to know the mental process that went on in the poor fellow's head. Did he instinctively feel that churches were recruiting grounds for lunatic asylums?

Rev. Alex Harvey, a Baptist minister of Widnes, was a candidate in the municipal election. Another candidate was Mr. Paul Caldwell, a local publican. And thereby hangs a tale. Mr. Harvey attacked the liquor trade, and represented himself as a lifelong teetotaler. Mr. Caldwell said that couldn't be true, as he had personally served Mr. Harvey with drink. Mr. Caldwell would not withdraw this allegation, and Mr. Harvey started an action against him for slander. When the case came on the jury found for Mr. Caldwell, on the ground that what he said was no injury to Mr. Harvey's character as a minister. How, indeed, could such a statement be an injury to the character of any Christian minister? It is blasphemous presumption on the part of a Christian to aim at being better than his Savior—and Jesus Christ was not a teetotaler; he not only drank good liquor himself, but actually manufactured it for others.

This action for slander reminds us of an old one which caused a great deal of amusement. A layman called a parson a fool, and the parson took the case into court, where

it was decided that no material damage had been suffered, as it had not been shown that being a fool was any hindrance in the plaintiff's profession.

A Church mission is being conducted at Yeovil. On Sunday evening the missionary was solemnly exhorting the congregation, when the frightful discordant sounds proceeded from the church organ. He had been warning his hearers against the wiles of Satan. "There, my brethren," he added, "that is an instance of the work of the devil, come to distract your attention." But the devil turned out to be the vicar, who had gone into the organ loft on business and had touched the wrong valve. "Wrong again!" says Old Nick, with a smile.

The Pope has issued a long jeremiad against the French Government. He denounces the unholy separation of State from Church—by which the Church loses nearly two millions a year. He complains in detail of the law of divorce, of the laicising of schools and hospitals, of the abolition of public prayers at the opening of parliament and law courts, of the suppression of mourning in the Navy on Good Friday, and of the banishment of religious emblems from all public places. These he describes as so many insults to the Holy See. He also says that they are gravely offensive to Almighty God. But why doesn't he let Almighty God speak for himself? The truth is that the Catholic Church has been the upper dog so long in France that it cannot understand being pulled off from the under dog—who now runs about as free as the other fellow. There is such a thing as vested interest in oppression and robbery; and the Pope is its spokesman.

The *New York Press* of January 20 printed this statement: "It is said that Bob Ingersoll, who coined money by making a laughing-stock of the Bible, repented on his death-bed." We would like to ask the *Press* who said it. Somebody must have set that unmitigated lie afloat. It could have been no friend of Ingersoll's, no Freethinker. The object could not have been to state a fact of history, but to bolster up religion by impeaching the sincerity of an unbeliever. The inventor of the falsehood was undoubtedly a religious person, a Christian; and everyone who reiterates "it is said that Bob Ingersoll repented on his death-bed" testifies that a religious liar is abroad. If that is considered complimentary to the Christian religion, we suppose the adherents of that religion will go on repeating it and advertising the fact that they have a liar among them. Meanwhile the friends of Ingersoll could offer a thousand dollars a word for every word he ever uttered showing that he repented of anything he ever said about the Bible. He had about as much cause to repent as the sun at setting has to repent that it has shone on the earth during the day. The advocates of Christianity are fulfilling the words of Thomas Paine, that having started with a falsehood they are under the lamentable necessity of going on.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Early in last October a Christian Bishop in Japan wrote a long letter to the *Times*, asserting that the Japanese were deficient in commercial morality. In reply the Manager of the Publication Department of the *Times* asserted that their experience in sending out some hundreds of sets of the *Britannica* was that the Japanese treated a commercial debt as a debt of honor, and were far better in this direction than were people at home. Bishop Audrey now tries to "hedge" by explaining the *Times'* experience on the grounds that the buyers of the *Britannica* would be chiefly drawn from the official and educated classes, who were superior to the others. But in its issue for February 16 the *Times* publishes figures showing that a large majority of the buyers were actually drawn from the commercial classes of Japan. So that once more it is shown that the Bishop has no better foundation for his statement than Christian bigotry and untruthfulness. But isn't it like a Christian preacher to first of all slander a people and then be without the grace to apologise when he meets with exposure? And the Bishop is out there to convert the Japanese!

Nonconformists boast of their strength and progress in Wales. Ten years ago they numbered 390,715; now they number 451,860. During the same period the Anglicans have only increased from 114,885 to 151,794. Hallelujah! But a cold-blooded statistician throws in the chilling remark that these figures tell another tale. The Anglicans have increased from 22.72 to 25.15 per cent of the total, while the Nonconformists have decreased from 77.28 to 74.85 of the total. Putting the figures another way, we may add that the Nonconformist absolute increase is 15.62 per cent. and the Anglican absolute increase 31.25 per cent.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

March 4, 11 and 18, Stanley Hall; 25, Coventry.
 April 1, Manchester; 8, Stratford Town Hall; 22 and 29, Queen's Hall.
 May 6, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool; 18, Liverpool; 25, Liverpool.
- E. ROBERTSHAW.—We do not think the editions of *Queen Mab* you refer to are of any particular value, but if they are you would learn on applying to Mr. Bertram Dobell, bookseller, Charing-cross-road, London, W.C. Jeafferson's *Life of Shelley* is a mere piece of hostile special pleading, written by one without a scintillation of insight and sympathy. We cannot undertake to sell books for our readers. No doubt you will see, on second thoughts, that the thing is impossible. We reciprocate your good wishes.
- A. WEBBER.—We agree with what you say about the "praying." Thanks for cuttings.
- FREETHINKER.—The Monument to Satan, a photograph of which you enclose, has been mentioned more than once in our columns. Thanks all the same.
- W. L. BUTLER.—James Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night*, with a capital selection from his other poems, is published in a neat volume at 3s. 6d. by Bertram Dobell, 77 Charing-cross-road, London, W.C. We fancy it is just the thing you want.
- ALCHEM.—Thanks for cuttings.
- J. BROUGH.—Too late for this week, but some may be useful next week.
- J. PARTRIDGE.—The dirty anonymous postcard writer may find himself identified. The circle of evidence is narrowing. This is all we care to say.
- J. S. C.—A touching communication.
- S. IMBER.—Sorry we cannot use it.
- E. J. MOHR.—Attended to. Thanks.
- A. M. ROUSE.—Glad to hear that you so highly value the *Freethinker* after reading it for fourteen months, through having free copies sent to you. Thanks for fresh addresses.
- W. P. BALL.—Always pleased to receive your useful cuttings.
- RIDGWAY FUND.—F. Bonte £2. J. Partridge (183 Vauxhall-road, Birmingham) also acknowledges: Friend 1s., J. Sumner jr. 5s., J. B. 6d.
- L. DESTEFANIS.—Glad to hear that Mr. Davies delivered such a good lecture to such a good audience at Forest Gate.
- J. W. DAWSON.—Thanks.
- A. F. COOK.—Never mind what "Bradlaugh's brother" says about Bradlaugh or anybody else. What the others tell you about Bradlaugh's "turning" before he died is sheer invention.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.
- PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 6s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.
- SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS: Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Sugar Plums.

North London Freethinkers will please note the new course of Sunday evening lectures at Stanley Hall, Junction-road, near "The Boston." These lectures are under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, and it is intended to advertise them as effectively as possible. "Saints" who will undertake to distribute neat printed announcements of the course are invited to apply for same (stating how many they can use) to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

The Stanley Hall course covers the Sunday evenings in March. Mr. Foote is to take the first, second, and third lectures, and Mr. Cohen the fourth. One of Mr. Foote's objects is to start a working Branch of the National Secular Society in the neighborhood. He will therefore hold a brief private meeting after his first lecture, and perhaps after the others also, with a view to getting the first members of the

new Branch together. We hope a good number of Freethinkers will embrace this opportunity of organising the movement in North London.

A Leicester correspondent thanks us for the six numbers of the *Freethinker* we sent him. "I like the paper," he says, "it rings true." He has ordered it through his news-agent. This should encourage our friends to go on sending us fresh addresses of persons who might become regular readers of the *Freethinker* if it were only introduced to them. We undertake to send a copy post free to every such address for six consecutive weeks. At the end of that period the recipient would know whether he wished to continue reading it or not, and in very many cases he becomes a subscriber. In saying "he" we do not wish to exclude "she." Quite the contrary. We are always delighted to get new lady readers.

The friends of the *Freethinker* should really, as a matter of principle, do what they can to promote its circulation. The boycott of this journal still continues, and is a serious impediment to its success. A Leith newsagent, who finds that there is "a growing demand for this class of literature," writes asking whether he can be supplied from our office direct, as his wholesale agents (Messrs. J. Menzies & Co., Edinburgh) had refused to supply "such publications." It is not too much to say that the *Freethinker* would now be paying us well for the twenty-five years' work we have put into it, if it only had a fair field and no favor in the matter of distribution. The boycott prevents this, and we appeal to all our friends to counteract it as far as possible.

The Labor Representation Committee, which has changed its name to the Labor Party, has been holding its Conference in London, and amongst its resolutions was one in favor of Secular Education. This was opposed by Mr. J. Sexton (Dockers), who said that Secular Education was a very dangerous policy for the Labor party to adopt; the feeling among working people in Lancashire, and particularly in Liverpool, was strongly against it. There was some more opposition, but when the vote was taken (by cards) it showed a big majority of 817,000 to 76,000 in favor of the resolution, which was thus carried triumphantly.

All the newspapers agree that an unprecedentedly large number of members affirmed instead of swearing allegiance in the new House of Commons. Mr. John Morley and Mr. John Burns were two of the foremost. There was a heavy percentage of affirmers amongst the Labor members. We hope they are all grateful to Charles Bradlaugh, the Atheist, who gave them the opportunity of acting in accordance with their principles. We say this because gratitude is not a very common thing, and least of all, perhaps, in politics.

February 17 was the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Heine. Of course it could not be overlooked by the newspapers, but what they said about it was mostly tame enough. The Freethought and Republican side of his genius was ignored. But it should never be forgotten by the true friends of liberty and progress. Heine was something more than the greatest poet Germany produced after Goethe. He was a fighter for the ideals of the Liberalism which then meant something in Europe. "I know not," he said, "if I deserve that a laurel-wreath should one day be laid on my coffin. Poetry, dearly as I have loved it, has always been to me but a divine plaything. I have never attached any great value to poetical fame; and I trouble myself very little whether people praise my verses or blame them. But lay on my coffin a sword; for I was a brave soldier in the Liberation War of humanity."

The duller sort of English readers, who do not understand the subtleties of Heine's humor, take too literally his statement that he had "turned back to the old superstition, to a personal God." He quite understood himself that this was a weakness of his unhappy position, lying year after year helpless upon his mattress-grave. When he went out of doors for the last time, in May 1848, he dragged himself with pain to the Louvre, and was nearly exhausted on entering "the lofty hall where the Most Blessed Goddess of Beauty, Our Dear Lady of Milo, stands on her pedestal." He fell at her feet and wept violently, and the pitying look on the Goddess's face was as if she would say: "See you not that I have no arms and so cannot help you?" He had to turn away from his "old heathen gods," but he reminded those who would make too much of this fact that he had parted with them "in love and friendship." In 1849 he said to Alfred Meissner:—

"A religious reaction has set in upon me for some time. God knows whether the morphine or the poultices have anything to do with it. It is so. I believe again in a per-

sonal God. To this we come when we are sick, sick to death and quite broken down. If the German people accept the King of Prussia in their need, why should I not accept a personal God? My friend, hear a great truth. When health is used up, money used up, and sound human sense used up, Christianity begins."

One would think that even the most pious would feel that the least said about such a conversion the better. To this same friend, a good deal later, he said with a sigh: "If I could even get out on crutches, do you know whither I would go? Straight to church." And seeing Meissner look incredulous he added: "Most decidedly to church. Where else should one go with crutches?" This is a touching mixture of wit and pathos, but where is the flavor of piety? In his will Heine forbade the attendance of any priest, or the performance of any religious ceremony, at his burial; but at the same time he declared his belief in "one only God, the eternal Creator of the world, whose pity I implore for my immortal soul." This looks sufficiently serious. Yet how does it look when read in the light of the following fact? Only a few hours before his death a friend called to see him once more. He asked Heine whether he was on good terms with God. "Set your mind at rest," said Heine, "God will pardon me, it is his trade (*c'est son metier*)."

One of Heine's last poems, translated into measured lengths of English prose by James Thomson ("B. V.") runs as follows:—

"Leave your holy parables,
Leave your pious suppositions;
Try to give straightforward answers
To the damnable old questions—
Why must Right, a bleeding outcast,
Trail the burden of the Cross,
While exultant as a victor
Riding the high-horse goes Wrong?
Where, then, lies the fault? Perchance
Our Lord is not quite Almighty?
Or himself he works the mischief?
Ah, but this were too degrading.
Thus we ask, and ask for ever,
Till at length our mouths are stopped
With a handful of mere earth;—
But can this be called an answer?"

Superb and imperishable expression was given to the same idea in Heine's short poem entitled "Questions"—of which James Thomson's translation is a veritable triumph. A youth stands by "the desert midnight sea" asking question after question about the Riddle of Life, and the upshot of it all is this:—

"The waves murmur their everlasting murmur,
The wind sweeps, the clouds send,
The stars glitter indifferent and cold,
And a fool awaits an answer."

It was not *this* Heine that one could expect to hear of in English newspapers—even in the twentieth century.

The *Daily News* "own correspondent" at Rome was wrong in referring to last Sunday as the three hundredth anniversary of the death of Giordano Bruno. That glorious martyr was burnt to death at Rome on February 17, 1600. We thank the "own correspondent," however, for the news that a crowd of representatives of the Liberal and Democratic Associations gathered round Bruno's statue on Sunday to commemorate one of the supreme events in the history of the world—for Bruno was burnt to death on the very spot where his splendid monument now stands. Garibaldians in red shirts gave a touch of color to the picture. Speakers denounced the new alliance of Clericals and Conservatives, by which the Church hoped to grasp power again. They urged that Italy should imitate the example of France. Finally the demonstrators made their way to the French Embassy, and cheered in honor of France.

Mr. Harrold Johnson, of the Moral Instruction League, in his admirable letter to the *Daily News*, did well to revive the declaration of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman at the Alexandra Palace banquet on November 1, 1902:—

"If we (Liberals) had our way, there would be no religious differences at all. We should confine ourselves—I believe nine-tenths of Liberals would confine themselves—to secular education, and to such moral precepts as would be common to all, and would not be obnoxious to people who do not come within the range of Christianity."

This is really, Mr. Johnson says, a statement of the policy of "secular education coupled with moral instruction." Some words of Dr. Clifford's are quoted as being practically to the same effect. But the Moral Instruction League should not fall a victim to the verbal trickery and tergiversation of the "Passive Resistance Cromwell." Mr. Johnson will find that what Dr. Clifford means by "ethical teaching" from the Bible is the syllabus of religious instruction drawn up by the late London School Board.

Mr. Johnson is to be thanked for pointing out that there are others than Churchmen and Catholics to whom "undenominationalism" is abhorrent. "There are others," he wrote, "outside all theologies, to whom it represents such lack of faith and courage and conviction and sincerity, such proneness to casuistry, that they regard it as one of the most subtle of morally corroding influences."

When the late Archbishop Temple became the head official of the Church of England he was bound, of course, to accept the Church policy in Education. But in his earlier and freer days he was an advocate of Secular Education. He even went to the length of saying that "The education which strengthens the character is, as our schools are constituted, not the religious but the secular." Likewise that what the clergy guaranteed in public schools was "not religion but respectability." The following utterance, which occurs in his *Memoirs* just published, will be of considerable interest to our readers:—

"A nation takes a wrong step when it falls away from its own deep convictions; not when in a matter where the best men are divided, and not very unequally divided, it chooses one course or another. Secular schools in England would not be irreligious; I am by no means sure that on the whole they and the system connected with them would not be more religious (in the ordinary sense of that word) than the denominational. And denominational schools on the whole will not be very religious; not, to tell the truth, so religious as I should wish them. I respect the feeling which makes England shrink from secular schools; but I cannot reverence what is so mere a sentiment. The sight of a secular system working by the side of the correlative religious system would dispel the whole feeling in a year."

This may be commended to the attention to the religious fanatics on all sides in the Education controversy.

Rev. F. Aveling writes from Cathedral Clergy House, Francis-street, S.W., asking us to draw attention to a series of free lectures which, he says, may be of interest to some of our readers. This we cheerfully do, as we are thoroughly desirous that our readers should hear all sides, including the Catholic one. The lectures are to be delivered in the Cathedral Hall, Ambrosden-avenue, Westminster, S.W., on Thursday evenings at 8.30, beginning with March 1, when Dr. Aveling will himself lecture on "Science and Faith," with the Archbishop of Westminster in the chair. Reserved seat tickets (2s.) and free tickets can be obtained by applying to Dr. Aveling. We should add that questions will be allowed after each lecture.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner had excellent audiences in lecturing for the Liverpool Branch on Sunday, and her addresses were warmly applauded. Mr. Schweizer occupies the Branch platform this evening, and then Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures for three Sundays in succession. The Branch "social" will be held on Tuesday, March 6, from 8 to 12 p.m. Tickets are 9d. each, but can be obtained not later than today (Feb. 25) for 6d.

Mr. Edward Carpenter, poet, essayist, and reformer, delivers a lecture on "Simplification of Life" at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, London, on Wednesday evening March 8. Chair to be taken at 8 o'clock. Admission free. The lecture is under the auspices of the Humanitarian League, and will be followed by discussion.

Personal.

TWO or three friends have written me concerning the "Personal" note in last week's *Freethinker*. I do not know at the moment whether what they suggest would exactly meet my wishes for my son. But we shall see. And in the meantime I offer them my thanks.

I let the matter appear again in this week's *Freethinker*, in order that the precisely right offer, if possible, may still come along. As I explained, I want my son to learn electrical engineering, but I have not the money to pay the heavy premiums which are so often demanded. There may be someone in the Freethought party who is both able and willing to give my boy an opportunity of learning the business for which I believe he is the most adapted. If there is such a person, I hope this will catch his eye, and evoke a ready response.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and Civilisation.

A FURTHER REPLY TO MR. GOULD.

MR. GOULD still adheres to his charge of timidity and intolerance. People who object to criticism generally raise the cry of intolerance, but intolerance consists in attempting to force a man to believe that which he does not believe. Or in preventing him from teaching that which he does believe. When I try to do either of those things, I will be content to be stigmatised as intolerant.

As to being too timid to acknowledge the good qualities of Christianity, I can only affirm that I can see no good whatever in the system called Christianity, nor has Mr. Gould said anything as yet to alter that opinion.

Mr. Gould's method is as follows. He takes the life of a saint and he says, here is a good deed, or there is a beautiful saying; that is the result of Christianity, see what good there is in this religion. If you point out that there are other deeds recorded, some harsh and unfeeling, others disgusting, he waives these actions aside as morbid details which you have no business to mention. And as he deals with history upon the same plan, of course he makes out a very good case—one could make out a good case for any religion by using that method—but the question is not to be settled in that easy fashion.

The fact is that Christianity—primitive Christianity, and the Christianity of the Middle Ages—had no idea of bettering the condition of the human race in this world. The love of this world was enmity with God. All the thoughts and aspirations of the saints and monks were concentrated upon the future life. Science and art distracted men's attention from the future life, therefore they were neglected and condemned,—except such art as ministered to religious purposes—it was this which caused the stagnation of the Dark Ages.

Mr. Gould looks at the Middle Ages with the eyes of a poet. He treads, in imagination, the cool cloister of a mediæval abbey and sees the peaceful recluse at work upon his illuminated manuscript. He enters the courtyard of the mediæval castle and sees the gallant knights fastening on their fair ladies favors before faring forth to the desperate wars.

But how much better it would have been for the world if those men, whose more peaceful instincts led them to seclude themselves in the Abbeys, had remained in the world and devoted themselves to bettering the condition of their fellow creatures, instead of wasting their lives in fasting and prayer. Moreover, the vow of celibacy—which, by the way, led to such unspeakable immorality—prevented them from marrying and passing on their finer instincts to their offspring; thus robbing mankind in two ways.

But what was the condition of the masses whose labor supported the mediæval system? What would have been the condition of Mr. Gould and myself in those days? The following passage from Taine's *Ancient Régime* will show:—

"Not to be killed," says Stendhal, "and to have a good sheepskin coat in winter, was, for many people in the tenth century, the height of felicity"; let us add, for a woman, that of not being violated by a whole band. When we clearly represent to ourselves the condition of humanity in those days, we can comprehend how men readily accepted the most obnoxious of feudal rights, even that of the *droit du Seigneur*."

As he says, "the people lived under a "rude, iron-gloved hand." The ages of faith were ages of grinding oppression and pitiless cruelty. Read the history of it in Dean Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*—not the work of a Freethinker, but of a dignitary of the Church; or in Hallam's *History of Europe during the Middle Ages*, where you can see something of the besotted ignorance of that dreary time. Ignorance was considered as praiseworthy as we now consider knowledge to be. Think of the advance we might have made if it had not been for the interregnum of the Dark Ages! We might have abolished poverty and found a remedy for many of

those terrible diseases which are still baffling the best medical science of our time. We are suffering to-day from the dead hand of the Ages of Faith. Walking home, a few days ago, in a pitiless storm of wind and snow—the worst we have had this year—I saw three little girls, from four to six years old, with naked feet, making their way through it as best they could. The sight made me flush with shame and pain, to think that I should belong to a civilisation which could permit of such things; and this was in Liverpool, the second city of the empire. My friend, we are a long way from being civilised yet, in spite of nearly two thousand years of the teaching of Christianity. The sufferings of the poor are only matched by the selfish and bestial indifference of the rich—"The mud-hearted bourgeois," as Francis Adams well named them.

Mr. Gould refers me to the Rev. Baring-Gould's *Lives of the Saints*. Well, the Rev. Baring-Gould is a cultivated and broad-minded gentleman; he is an antiquary, an archæologist, and a novelist. His *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, *The Lost and Hostile Gospels*, and *The Origin and Development of Religious Belief* contain much out-of-the-way information interesting to Freethinkers. Certainly the rev. gentleman has done his best for the *Lives of the Saints*—with a style like his he could make almost any subject interesting. But he himself confesses in the preface that he was compelled to put aside a great number of saints "whose eventless lives flowed uniformly in prayer, vigil, and mortification." Well, what good did these saints do for humanity? If they had never lived, the world would have been none the worse for their absence. The rev. gentleman also admits that in the matter of miracles he has selected the most beautiful and most quaint. But even he cannot disguise the asceticism, starvation, and misery in which the majority of them existed, as those can see for themselves who care to tackle the fifteen volumes he has compiled.

In conclusion, while entirely reciprocating Mr. Gould's amiability, and trusting, in the cycle of sequences, to form his personal acquaintance, I must entirely dissent from his views on Christianity.

W. MANN.

The Blasphemy Statute.

WE have been asked to print the Blasphemy Statute of 1697—technically known as 9 & 10 William III, C. 3—and called in the preamble "An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness." Reference was made to it in our article on "The Blasphemy Laws" before the recent general elections, in which we gave its substantial provisions. But it appears that many parliamentary candidates poo-hooed the idea of this Act being any restriction on liberty of thought. They had always "supposed" it was meant to put down "profane language." This was not the case, however; those who take the trouble to read it through will see that there is not a word in it about "indecent" or "scurrilous" expressions, and that it is directly and entirely aimed at heterodox opinions. The following is the whole Act:—

"Whereas many persons have of late years openly avowed and published many blasphemous and impious opinions contrary to the doctrines and principles of the Christian religion, greatly tending to the dishonor of Almighty God, and may prove destructive to the peace and welfare of this kingdom; Wherefore, for the more effectual suppressing of the said detestable crimes, be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons of this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that if any person or persons having been educated in, or at any time having made profession of, the Christian religion within this realm shall, by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny any one of the persons in the Holy Trinity to be God or shall assert or maintain there are more gods than one, or shall deny

the Christian religion to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority, and shal, upon indictment or information in any of his Majesties Courts at Westminster, or at the assizes, be thereof lawfully convicted by the oath of two or more credible witnesses, such person or persons for the first offence shal be adjudged incapable and disabled in law to all intents and purposes whatsoever to have or enjoy any office or offices, employment or employments, ecclesiastical, civil, or military or any part in them, or any profit or advantage appertaining to them, or any of them. And if any person or persons so convicted as aforesaid shal at the time of his or their conviction, enjoy or possess any office, place, or employment such office, place, or employment shal be void, and is hereby declared void. And if such person or persons shal be a second time lawfully convicted, as aforesaid, of all or any the aforesaid crime or crimes that then he or they shal from thenceforth be disabled to sue, prosecute, plead, or use any action or information in any court of law or equity, or to be guardian of any child, or executor or administrator of any person, or capable of any legacie or deed of gift, or to bear any office, civil or military, or benefice ecclesiastical for ever within this realm, and shal also suffer imprisonment for the space of three years, without bail or mainprize from the time of such conviction.

Provided always, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that no person shal be prosecuted by virtue of this Act for any words spoken, unless the information of such words shal be given upon oath before one or more justice or justices of the peace within four days after such words spoken, and the prosecution of such offence be within three months after such information.

Provided also, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that any person or persons convicted of all, or any, of the aforesaid crime or crimes in manner aforesaid, shal, for the first offence (upon his, her, or their acknowledgment and renunciation of such offence, or erroneous opinions, in the same court where such person or persons was or were convicted, as aforesaid, within the space of four months after his, her, or their conviction) be discharged from all penalties and disabilities incurred by such conviction, any thing in this Act contained to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding."

The words italicised were repealed by the 53 George III, Cap. 160, which was designed to protect Unitarians. But this Act is not included in the revised Statute Book, being apparently treated as spent; and the Unitarians may therefore be just as liable as Freethinkers. Justice Best, indeed, in the case of Waddington (1822) held that it was really not permissible to attack "the divinity of Christ." And it is obvious that if the words in italics were absolutely repealed the whole Act is repealed—which has always been held not to be the case. The qualification in favor of Unitarians was really inconsistent with the Act it limited.

Ingersoll's First Lecture.—IV.

(Continued from p. 93.)

LET me show you the condition of England at the beginning of the eighteenth century. At that time London was the most populous capital in Europe, yet it was dirty, ill built, without any sanitary provisions whatever. The deaths were one in twenty-three each year. Now in a much more crowded population they are not one in forty. Much of the country was then heath and swamp. Almost within sight of London there was a tract, twenty-five miles round, almost in a state of nature; there were but three houses upon it. In the rainy season the roads were almost impassable. Through gullies filled with mud, carriages were dragged by oxen. Between places of great importance the roads were little known, and a principal mode of transport was by pack horses, of which passengers took advantage by stowing themselves away between the packs. The usual charge for freight was thirty cents per ton a mile. After a while, what they were pleased to call flying coaches were established. They could move from thirty to fifty miles a day. Many persons thought the risk so great that it was tempting Providence to get into one of them. The mail bag was carried on horseback at five miles an hour. A penny post had been established in the city, but many long-headed men, who knew what they were saying, denounced it as a popish contrivance. Only a few

years before, Parliament had resolved that all pictures in the royal collection which contained representations of Jesus or the Virgin Mary should be burned. Greek statues were handed over to the Puritan stone masons to be made decent. Lewis Meggleton had given himself out as the last and the greatest of the prophets, having power to save or damn. He had also discovered that God was only six feet high and the sun four miles off. There were people in England as savage as our Indians. The women, half naked, would chant some wild measure, while the men would brandish their dirks and dance. There were thirty-four counties without a printer. Social discipline was wretched. The master flogged his apprentice, the pedagogue his scholar, the husband his wife; and I am ashamed to say that whipping has not been abolished in our schools. It is a relic of barbarism and should not be tolerated one moment. It is brutal, low and contemptible. The teacher that administers such punishment is no more to blame than the parents that allow it. Every gentleman and lady should use his or her influence to do away with this vile and infamous practice. In those days public punishments were all brutal. Men and women were put in the pillory and then pelted with brick-bats, rotten eggs and dead cats, by the rabble. The whipping-post was then an institution in England as it is now in the enlightened State of Delaware. Criminals were drawn and quartered; others were disemboweled and hung and their bodies suspended in chains to rot in the air. The houses of the people in the country were huts, thatched with straw. Anybody who could get fresh meat once a week was considered rich. Children six years old had to labor. In London the houses were of wood or plaster, the streets filthy beyond expression, even muddier than Bloomington is now. After nightfall a passenger went about at his peril, for chamber windows were opened and slop pails unceremoniously emptied. There were no lamps in the streets, but plenty of highwaymen and robbers.

The morals of the people corresponded, as they generally do, to their physical condition. It is said that the clergy did what they could to make the people pious, but they could not accomplish much. You cannot convert a man when he is hungry. He will not accept better doctrines until he gets better clothes, and he won't have more faith till he gets more food. Besides this, the clergy were a little below par, so much so that Queen Elizabeth issued an order that no clergyman should presume to marry a servant girl without the consent of her master or mistress. During the same time the condition of France and indeed of all Europe was even worse than England. What has changed the condition of Great Britain? More than any and everything else, the inventions of her mechanics. The old moral method was and always will be a failure. If you wish to better the condition of a people morally, better them physically. About the close of the 18th Century, Watt, Arkwright, Hargreave, Crompton, Cartwright invented the steam engine, the spring frame, the jenny, the mule, the power loom, the carding machine and a hundred other minor inventions, and put it in the power of England to monopolise the markets of the world. Her machinery soon became equal to 30,000,000 of men. In a few years the population was doubled and the wealth quadrupled; and England became the first nation of the world through her inventors, her merchants, her mechanics, and in spite of her statesmen, her priests and her nobles. England began to spin for the world, cotton began to be universally worn, clean shirts began to be seen. The most cunning spinners of India could make a thread over 100 miles long from one pound of cotton. The machines of England have produced one over 1,000 miles in length from the same quantity. In a short time Stephenson invented the locomotive. Railroads began to be built. Fulton gave to the world the steamboat, and commerce became independent of the winds. There are already railroads enough in the United States to make a double track around the world. Man has lengthened his arms. He reaches to every country and takes what he wants; the world is before him; he helps himself. There can be no more famine. If there is no food in this country, the boat and the car will bring it from another.

We can have the luxuries of every climate. A majority of the people now live better than the king used to do. Poor Solomon with his thousand wives, and no carpets, his great temple, and no gas light! A thousand women, and not a pin in the house; no stoves, no cooking range, no baking powder, no potatoes—think of it! Breakfast without potatoes! Plenty of wisdom and old saws—but no green corn; never heard of succotash in his whole life. No clean clothes, no music, if you except a jew's-harp, no ice water, no skates, no carriages, because there was not a decent road in all his dominions. Plenty of theology but no tobacco, no books, no pictures, not a picture in all Palestine, not a piece of statuary, not a plough that would scour. No tea, no coffee; he never heard of any place of amusement, never was at a theatre, or a circus. "Seven up" was then unknown to the world. He couldn't even play billiards, with all his knowledge, never had an idea of woman's rights, or universal suffrage; never went to school

a day in his life, and cared no more about the will of the people than Andy Johnson.

The inventors have helped more than any other class to make the world what it is; the workers and the thinkers, the poor and the grand; labor and learning, industry and intelligence; Watt and Descartes, Fulton and Montaigne, Stephenson and Kepler, Crompton and Comte, Franklin and Voltaire, Morse and Buckle, Draper and Spencer, and hundreds more that I could mention. The inventors, the workers, the thinkers, the mechanics, the surgeons, the philosophers—these are the Atlases upon whose shoulders rests the great fabric of modern civilisation.

LANGUAGE.

In order to show you that the most abject superstition pervaded every department of human knowledge, or of ignorance rather, allow me to give you a few of their ideas upon language. It was universally believed that all languages could be traced back to the Hebrew; that the Hebrew was the original language, and every fact inconsistent with that idea was discarded. In consequence of this belief all efforts to investigate the science of language were utterly fruitless. After a time, the Hebrew idea falling into disrepute, other languages claimed the honor of being the original ones.

André Kempe published a work in 1569, on the language of Paradise, in which he maintained that God spoke to Adam in Swedish; that Adam answered in Danish and that the serpent (which appears quite probable) spoke to Eve in French. Erro, in a book published at Madrid, took the ground that Basque was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. But in 1580, Goropius published his celebrated work at Antwerp, in which he put the whole matter at rest by proving that the language spoken in Paradise was nothing more or less than plain Holland Dutch. The real founder of the present science of language was a German, Leibnitz—a contemporary of Sir Isaac Newton. He discarded the idea that all language could be traced to an original one. That language was, so to speak, a natural growth. Actual experience teaches us that this must be true. The ancient sages of Egypt had a vocabulary, according to Bunsen, of only about six hundred and eighty-five words, exclusive of proper names. The English language has at least one hundred thousand.

(To be continued.)

Death of Mr. Charles Watts.

WE regret to hear through the newspapers of the death of Mr. Charles Watts, which occurred on Friday, February 16; the funeral taking place on the following Wednesday at the Golder's Green Crematorium. Mr. Watts had been ailing for a considerable time, and we are sorry to learn that he passed through much suffering to the great release.

Born at Bristol on February 28, 1835, Mr. Watts was nearly seventy-one years of age at the time of his decease. During almost two-thirds of that period he had been occupied in the propaganda of Free-thought. He delivered innumerable lectures, held many public debates, conducted or contributed to several journals, and wrote a large number of pamphlets. As a writer he was careful and lucid without being brilliant or original. As a speaker he was bold and powerful, knowing the art of elocution, and having a long and varied experience of platform advocacy; to which must be added that his memory went back to the oratory of Southwell, and the still more striking and passionate oratory of Bradlaugh.

Mr. Watts had visited America several times, and had spent some years at Toronto, where he delivered Sunday lectures to large audiences, and started a weekly journal (now a monthly) called *Secular Thought*. During his lecturing tours in the States he made the acquaintance of Colonel Ingersoll and S. P. Putnam, amongst the dead, and Dr. Foote and Eugene Macdonald of the New York *Truthseeker*, amongst the living. His name was familiar in American Free-thought circles, at least it was so ten years ago, and many who knew him by sight over there will learn with regret—and in some cases with deep regret—that another veteran Freethinker has joined the majority.

Mr. Watts was associated with Charles Bradlaugh in founding the National Secular Society in the

sixties. He also wrote for, and during a brief period sub-edited, the *National Reformer*. In 1877 a separation took place between him and Bradlaugh. He carried on the *Secular Review* for some time, and then went to America, the paper passing into the hands of Mr. Stewart Ross. On the death of Bradlaugh, in 1891, Mr. Watts returned to England from Toronto, and settled as resident Secular lecturer at Birmingham, in connection with the Baskerville Hall. This experiment owed much to the generosity of the late Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, and was also supported by other contributors; but it did not succeed, and in two or three years Mr. Watts left Birmingham and settled in London. He worked once more with the National Secular Society, and became one of its Vice-Presidents. He also became a regular paid contributor to the *Freethinker*, and when Mr. Foote gave up his printing office Mr. Watts became his printer at 17 Johnson's-court—the old office where he had formerly worked on the *National Reformer* with Bradlaugh. In 1902 relations between Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts having become strained, for reasons given at the time and not to be revived now, a separation took place, and Mr. Watts associated himself openly with the Rationalist organisation managed by his son. That is why the press paragraphs refer to him as "the Rationalist advocate." But he was associated with Rationalism only for the last three years or so of his life; all the rest of it, as far as it was public, was spent in the service of Secularism; and over the history of Secularism his mind must have wandered in his last hours of conscious existence.

Correspondence.

HOW THEY DO IT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The daily and evening papers of Thursday and Friday dates contained an announcement to the effect that Prebendary Carlile, of the Church Army had been received by the King, with whom he had had an interesting audience. The following is the manner in which the matter got into the press. On Thursday morning the Press Agencies and newspaper correspondents received an intimation to the effect that Mr. Carlile would be received in audience by the King, and that subsequently he would receive all newspaper correspondents at 1 p.m. at Anderton's, to supply them with an account of the interview. At this meeting Mr. Carlile read an account of his interview, emphasising the stops in his "copy" by exclaiming "Comma," "Semicolon," "Full stop"—as the case was. The report concluded, he invited some of the correspondents to dine with him. In this way is history made and Christian humility glorified.

GUY A. ALDRED.

MODERN CLERGY.

Crabbe, descanting "on the so-called Christian *Clerus*," has this wild passage: "Legions of them, in their black or other gowns, I still meet in every country; masquerading, in strange costume of body, and still stranger of soul; mumming, primming, grimacing—poor devils, shamming, and endeavoring not to sham: that is the sad fact. Brave men many of them, after their sort; and in a position which we may admit to be wonderful and dreadful! On the outside of their heads some singular headgear, tulip, mitre, felt coalscuttle, purple hat; and in the inside,—I must say, such a Theory of God Almighty's Universe as I, for my share, am right thankful to have no concern with at all! I think, on the whole, as broken-winged, self-strangled, monstrous a mass of incoherent incredibilities, as ever dwelt in the human brain before. O God, giver of Light, hater of darkness, of Hypocrisy and Cowardice, how long, how long!"—*Carlyle, "Latter-Day Pamphlets."*

Let us never forget that an act of goodness is of itself always an act of happiness. It is the flower of a long inner life of joy and contentment; it tells of peaceful hours and days on the sunniest heights of our soul. No reward coming after the event can compare with the sweet reward that went with it.—*Maeterlinck.*

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.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 3.15, J. Somerville, "Noah."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, H. Spence, "Hereditary."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): Social Gathering. Tea at 5.

FAIRFORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Willie Dyson, "The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (110 Brunswick-street): 12 (noon), Discussion Class: John Glen, "An Hour with the Microscope"; 6.30, Miss Alice Muirhead, "Some Aspects of Indian Affairs."

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Monday, Feb. 26, at 8, Rev. Jas. Forrest, "Ethics of Modern Progress."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): 3, E. A. Killip, "The Bottom Dog"; 7, W. C. Schweizer, "Modern Slavery." Tuesday, March 6, Social.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, 3, "God and the Land"; 6.30, "The Schools, the Bible, and the Church." Tea at 5.

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, March 1, at 8, J. S. Clarke, "The Ingoldsby Legends."

PORTh BRANCH N. S. S. (Room, Town Hall, Porth): 6.30, E. Thomas, "Municipal Duties."

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

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