

THE Freethinker

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You have not converted a man, because you have silenced him. Opinion and force belong to different elements. To think that you are able by social disapproval or other coercive means to crush a man's opinion, is as one who should fire a blunderbuss to put out a star.—JOHN MORLEY.

The Lord of Lords.

[This article was written in 1884. With a few alterations it is singularly appropriate to the present situation. Most of our readers will gladly accept it this week, we think, instead of a special article by the Editor.]

WE are in the midst of a political crisis. The House of Lords opposes a reform unanimously voted by the House of Commons. Great demonstrations are being held all over the country, to insist on the popular will being carried into effect, and there is a growing cry of "Down with the Lords." A spectator from another planet might wonder at all the fuss. He might marvel how forty millions of people needed to stamp and gesticulate against a handful of obstructives. He might imagine that they had only to decree a thing and it would immediately be; that all opposition to their sovereign will would melt away the moment they declared it. This traveller, however, would soon be undeceived. A little study would show him that the people are kept in check by faith and custom. He would learn that the nation is tied down like Gulliver was, by ligatures springing from its own head. Behind the King there is a King of Kings; behind the Lords there is a Lord of Lords. Behind every earthly despotism there is a heavenly one. The rulers of mankind overawe the people by religious terrors. They keep a body of men in their pay, the black army of theology, whose business it is to frighten people from their rights by means of a ghost behind the curtain. Nobody has ever seen the bogie, but we are taught to believe in it from our infancy, and faith supplies the deficiencies of sight. Thus we are enslaved by our own consent. Our will is suborned against our interests. We wear no chains to remind us of our servitude, but our liberty is restrained by the subtle web of superstition, which is so fine as to be imperceptible except to keen and well-practised eyes, and elastic enough to cheat us with a false sense of freedom.

Yes, we must seek in religion the secret of all political tyranny and social injustice. Not only does history show us the bearing of religion on politics—we see it to-day wherever we cast our gaze. Party feeling is so embittered in France because the sharp line of division in politics corresponds with the sharp line of division in religion. On the one side there is Freethought and Republicanism, and on the other Catholicism and Monarchy. Even in England, which

at present knows less of the naked despotism of the Catholic Church than any other European country, we are gradually approximating to a similar state of things. Freethought is appearing upon the public stage, and will play its peculiar part as naturally as religion does. Those who fancy that theology and politics have no necessary relations, that you may operate in the one without affecting the other, and that they can and should be kept distinct, are grossly mistaken. Cardinal Newman has well shown how it is the nature of ideas to assimilate to themselves whatever agrees with them, and to destroy whatever disagrees. When once an idea enters the human mind it acts according to the necessary laws of thought. It changes to its own complexion all its mental surroundings, and through every mental and moral channel influences the world of practice outside. The real sovereigns of mankind, who sway its destinies with irresistible power, are not the czars, emperors, kings, and lords, nor even the statesmen who enact laws when public sentiment is ripe; they are the great thinkers who mould opinion, the discoverers and enunciators of Truth, the men of genius who pour the leaven of their ideas and enthusiasm into the sluggish brain of humanity.

Belief in God is the source and principle of all tyranny. This lies in the very nature of things. For what is God? All definitions of religion, from Johnson's down to that of the latest dictionary, agree on this one point: that it is concerned with man's relations to *the unknown*. Yes, God is the Unknown, and theology is the science of ignorance. Earl Beaconsfield, in his impish way, once said that where our knowledge ends our religion begins. A truer word was never spoken.

Now the unknown is the terrible. We become fearful the moment we confront the incalculable. Go through the history of religions, consult the various accounts of savage and barbarous faiths at present extant, and you will find that the principle of terror, springing from the unknown, is the essential feature in which they all agree. This terror inevitably begets slavishness. We cannot be cowardly in this respect without its affecting our courage in others. The mental serf is a bodily serf too, and spiritual fetters are the agencies of political thralldom. The man who worships a tyrant in heaven naturally submits his neck to the yoke of tyrants on earth. He who bows his intellect to a priest will yield his manhood to a king. Everywhere on earth we find the same ceremonies attending every form of dependence. The worshiper who now kneels in prayer to God, like the courtier who backs from the presence of the monarch, is performing an apology for the act of prostration which took place alike before the altar and the throne. In both cases it was the adoration of fear, the debasement of the weak before the seat of irresponsible power.

Authority is still the principle of our most refined creeds. The majority of Christians believe in salvation by faith; and what is the God of that dogma but a capricious tyrant, who saves or damns according to his personal whim? The ministers of Protestantism, like the priests of Catholicism, recognise this practically in their efforts to regulate public education. They dare not trust to the effect of persuasion on the unprejudiced mind; they must bias the minds of children by means of dogmatic teaching. They bend the twig in order to warp the tree.

Now God is the supreme principle of authority as he is the essence of the unknown. He is thus the head, front, and symbol of terror and slavery, and as such must be assailed by every true soldier of Progress. We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions; and even if we abolish the House of Lords we shall still dwell in the house of bondage unless we abolish the Lord of Lords; for the evil principle will remain as a germ to develop into new forms of oppression.

Freethought is the real Savior. When we make a man a Freethinker, we need not trouble greatly about his politics. He is sure to go right in the main. He may mistake here or falter there, but his tendency will always be sound. Thus it is that Freethinkers always vote, work, and fight for the popular cause. They have discarded the principle of authority in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, and left it to the Conservative party, to which all religionists belong precisely in proportion to the orthodoxy of their faith. Freethought goes to the root. It reaches the intellect and the conscience, and does not merely work at haphazard on the surface of our material interests and party struggles. It aims at the destruction of all tyranny and injustice by the sure methods of investigation and discussion, and the free play of mind on every subject. It loves Truth and Freedom. It turns away from the false and sterile ideas of the Kingdom of God and faces the true and fruitful idea of the Republic of Man.

G. W. FOOTE.

A Problem in Determinism.—II.

(Concluded from p. 755.)

THE answer to both the questions raised in my last article is to be found in a consideration of man's psychological nature. Very largely criticisms of Determinism have been based upon a defective analysis of mental states, and also upon a psychology too atomistic in character. It is this last quality that makes so much writing on psychology unsatisfactory, and which allows men of even the standing of Professor William James to offer in defence of a disguised supernaturalism arguments that would not otherwise be forthcoming. Because in studying the mental qualities of man we are compelled to deal with an individual brain, it has been tacitly assumed that mental phenomena may be explained with no more than a casual reference to anything beyond the individual organism. This assumption may be quite sound so long as we are dealing with mind as a function of definitely localised organs, or if we are merely concerned with a description of mental states. It is when we put to ourselves the larger question of how certain aspects of mental phenomena came to be that we find the atomistic psychology breaking down, and we are compelled to deal with mind as an expression of social forces and to consider its workings in relation to the social medium. Then we discover that it is man's social relationships, the innumerable generations of reactions between man and the social medium, that supply the key to problems that are otherwise insoluble.

Consider for a moment the real significance of morality. So long as we confine ourselves to the individual, what explanation can be given of such qualities as sympathy, honesty, truthfulness, chastity, kindness? Apart from social relationships these things are meaningless; morality itself ceases to

have any meaning apart from the social medium. Properly studied, psychology yields much the same result. When we get beyond the apprehension of such fundamental qualities as time and space, heat and cold, color and form, the contour of man's mind, so to speak, is a social product. And from this point of view the phrase "social sense" is no mere figure of speech; it is the expression of a pregnant truth, the statement of a fact that is as real as any scientific law with which we are acquainted.

For all scientific laws are no more than the expression of relations. The law of gravitation, for instance, is simply an expression of the relations existing between particles of matter. If there were only one particle of matter in existence, gravitation would be meaningless. Introduce a second particle, and we set up a relation between the two; and the description of this relation is all that we properly mean by the law of gravitation. In the same way the description of individual human qualities is fundamentally a statement of the relations existing between individuals living in groups, and any attempt to understand human nature without considering these relations is as certainly foredoomed to failure as would be the attempt to study a particle of matter apart from the operation of all known forces. The individual as he is to-day is not something existing apart from the social forces; he is an expression, an epitome, of all the past and present operations of those forces. The really important thing in the study of human nature is not so much the individual A or B as it is the relations existing between the two. It is these that make the individual what he is—determines his language, feelings, thought, and character.

It is, I think, along these lines that we have to seek an explanation of the feeling that we can initiate a reformation in character, and the sense of power we possess of determining events. We start with a feeling of power over the course of events—a feeling that is interpreted as the equivalent of our ability to absolutely initiate a change in our own character or in that of others. But a little reflection convinces us—particularly if we call ourselves Determinists—that this interpretation is quite erroneous. An absolute beginning is no more conceivable in the mental or moral sphere than it is in the physical world. The sum of all that is is the sum of all that has been, and in this total, desires, feelings, dispositions, are included no less than physical properties. Now, curiously enough, the conviction that the individual can effect an absolute change in character exists in greater strength with regard to oneself than it does with regard to others. Most people can more easily realise that what someone else does is the product of their heredity and their environment than they can realise it in their own case. Of course, reflection shows that the same principle applies, but we are dealing here with moods rather than with carefully reasoned out convictions. Generally speaking, while we *feel* ourselves masters of our own fate, we only suspect a similar strength on the part of others. And we do realise with increasing vividness the power we possess in modifying people's character by change of circumstances. We see this illustrated in the increased emphasis placed upon the importance of better housing, better sanitation, better conditions of labor, and a more improved education. Human nature, we perceive, is an extremely modifiable thing, although as few of us have enough patience, or sufficient of the scientific spirit, or possess the requisite powers of analysis, our observations are chiefly concerned with other people. We see how their conduct results from the interaction of organism and environment, we see, also, our own function as a determinative influence, none the less real even though it is recognised, as it should be recognised, that between ourselves and others the relation is mutual; we are all terms of a causal sequence.

It is the perception of the fact of these social reactions which gives us a sense of *power* in determining events. I say power because freedom is an

altogether different matter. The question of whether we are "free" to determine events or not is, as I have before shown, quite meaningless when applied to a scientific inquiry, and can only be used in the sense of an absence of arbitrary restraints. But the question of whether we have *power* to determine events may be answered in the affirmative—an answer that is not affected by our power being conditioned by all past and present circumstances. The sense of power is a real thing, expresses a fact, even though the fact be an inevitable one. We are all shapers of each other's character, moulders of each other's destiny. The recognition of our power to do this is not only not contrary to Determinism, it is implied in the Deterministic theory. It is this also which gives a real meaning to the term "social sense." For the social sense can have no other meaning or value than a recognition of the action of one individual upon another, and, as in the case of a chemical product, the setting up of something that is not given by the factors considered singly.

So, too, do we get by this method a real meaning and a higher meaning to the word "Freedom." When writing on Determinism in the early part of this year, I pointed out that the word was of purely social origin. Its meaning applied to an individual is that he is at liberty to put his desires into operation unrestricted by the coercive action of his fellows. I may now point out that this is the negative and lower meaning of the word. But there is a positive and higher meaning that belongs to it. Man is a social animal, his whole morality and character is a social product. The purely human qualities not only lose their value divorced from social relationships, it is these relationships that provide the only means for their activity. To say that a person is free to express moral qualities in the absence of his fellows is meaningless, since it is only in their presence that their manifestation is possible. It is the free and unfettered intercourse of man with his fellow that gives to each whatever real freedom he possesses. Freedom is born of social intercourse, and the restraints imposed upon each member of society in the interests of all are not a curtailing of human freedom, but the condition of its manifestations. To chafe against them is, to use Kant's famous illustration, as unreasonable as a bird's revolt against the opposing medium of an atmosphere, in ignorance of the fact that it is this opposition that makes flight possible. The only freedom man can know is that expression of purely human qualities afforded by social life. Human freedom has its origin in social relationships, and to these we are ultimately driven to discover its meaning and significance.

So far, I have, I trust, explained to what is due that sense of power over circumstances possessed by all of us to a greater or smaller extent. I have also tried to show the meaning and conditions of human freedom. Only one other point remains on which to say a word, and this is whether a conviction of the causal character of human action would lead to a weakening of effort. Why should it have this effect? It is curious that those who dwell upon this point seem to only have in their minds the tendencies in the wrong. But there are also tendencies in the contrary direction, and if a feeling of the inevitableness of human action operates in the determination of conduct (a consideration to which we may easily give more weight than it deserves) this must operate in the direction of making more certain both tendencies, good as well as bad. And this being so we are certainly justified in claiming that on this score merit and demerit will remain as before. But this fear, as I have hinted, is largely groundless, for the truth would seem to be that the really vicious characters are not at all given to reflecting upon the origin and nature of their desires, while those who are given to this form of introspection are not usually vicious. It is the latter class of people who are, I fancy, giving to the other description a degree of intelligence and power of analysis they do not ordinarily possess.

Finally, the argument takes a too purely intellectual view of human conduct. It does not allow for the operation of sympathy, or for the power of social reactions. And these, as has already been said, are not only real things, they are the things of chief importance when considering human nature. Man cannot sit passive even though he would. The power of sympathy urges him to action, the desire for social intercourse, the invincible feeling that in some way he is vitally concerned with the well-being of the society to which he belongs, are always in operation, even though their degree of intensity varies with different individuals. One cannot possibly isolate man in considering conduct, because his whole nature has been moulded by social intercourse and continuously craves for social intercourse and social approval. It is these feelings that immediately determine conduct. The mental perception of the causes and conditions of conduct can operate but slowly in comparison therewith. And in their operation they are all the time checked and modified by the fundamental requirements of the social structure.

C. COHEN.

Aristotle and Jesus.

WE are assured by the theologian that philosophy and religion are two entirely different things. "Religion is the primal fact," he tells us, "while philosophy is the attempted explanation of the fact." Aristotle gave the world a new philosophy, and Jesus a new religion. Now, if religion is "the primal fact," and if the only perfect religion came by Jesus Christ, does it not follow that Jesus should have preceded Aristotle? Is it not strange that "the attempted explanation of the fact" appeared so many centuries before the fact itself? This is a putting of the cart before the horse with a vengeance. Of course, a New Theologian, like "J. B." of the *Christian World*, finds no difficulty here at all, but is able to say that "in the early world philosophy and religion grew side by side, but with a curiously separate history." Religion, "the primal fact," grew in Palestine, and philosophy, "the attempted explanation of the fact," in Greece; the fact itself, and by itself, in one country, and the attempt to explain the fact, also by itself, in another. "The Jew did not philosophise"; he was quite satisfied with the fact unexplained. The Greek did philosophise; and yet the fact about which he philosophised was not in his possession. It is all very well for "J. B." to assert that "philosophy and religion are very near relations, and that, as is at times the way with near relations, they have very often quarrelled," but he must be aware of the fact that, in relation to the religion, "the primal fact," of their own days, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were pronounced Freethinkers, and did much to destroy it. Aristotle had a theology, it is true, but it was a theology that excluded "such a thing as Divine interference with Nature," as well as "the possibility of revelation, inspiration, miracles, and grace." It would have required an exceptionally powerful microscope to detect any relationship, near or remote, between philosophy and religion just then.

Coming to the New Testament, we find philosophy associated with "vain deceit," and "the wisdom of this world" denounced as valueless. To Jesus, philosophy was unknown, and Paul despised it. According to the latter, there is nothing that God enjoys so much as "putting to shame them that are wise." Everywhere in this volume Jesus, the dreamer, is pitted against Aristotle, the thinker, and natural knowledge is frowned upon as tending to "puff up" and discourage faith. The attitude of the New Testament to philosophy has also been the attitude of the Church in all ages. Plato and Aristotle were benighted Pagans, who died without knowing God as Savior and Lord. Everybody knows how much

Christian theology owes to Greek philosophy. In the Middle Ages the Aristotelian logic reigned supreme in all theological thinking; but, while borrowing his method wholesale without a blush, the Church of the all-loving God did not hesitate to proclaim that the man himself had his abode in hell. Heaven was reserved for deceased Christians, they alone meriting endless bliss. Dante mirrors for us the hideous barbarism of the theological location of the dead. In Limbo, the first circle of hell, the poet "spied the master of the sapient throng," the great Stagirite, "seated amid the philosophic train." "Him all admire," he adds, "all pay him reverence due." But he was not alone. Socrates, Plato, Democritus, Diogenes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Thales, Zeno, and many other illustrious children of the earth, kept him company. This is Dante's description of their abode and its misery:—

"Here, as mine ear could note, no plaint was heard
Except of sighs, that made the eternal air
Tremble, not caused by tortures, but from grief,
Felt by those multitudes, many and vast,
Of men, women, and infants. Then to me
The gentle guide: 'Inquirest thou not what spirits
Are these which thou beholdest? Ere thou pass
Farther, I would thou know, that these of sin
Were blameless; and if aught they merited,
It profits not, since baptism was not theirs,
The portal to thy faith. If they before
The Gospel lived, they served not God aright;
And among such am I. For these defects,
And for no other evil, we are lost;
Only so far afflicted, that we live
Desiring without hope.'"

That is a true picture of the Christian attitude to philosophy as such. The only philosophy which the Church can tolerate is a philosophy that has no independent existence, a philosophy that can be so adapted as to serve its own speculative purposes. Aristotle and Jesus are natural enemies, and can never come to terms. It is only at the cost of surrendering its own rights that philosophy hobnobs with Christianity.

Let us return to "J. B." This is how he speaks of Aristotle in the *Christian World* for November 25:—

"He believes in God, the Pure Reason, the Eternal Mover. But the development of things arises from their mere nature. There is nothing in his system answering to the Christian idea of a personal Providence. And he dismisses the hope of a hereafter for us. Thought will not be extinguished at the dissolution of the body, but will return to the universal reason. But that does not mean the continuance of the individual. With Aristotle we are in the driest of the dry light. After Aristotle, Epicurus, who follows the Stagirite not in time only, but to some extent in principle. He too is for thisworldness and making the best of life as it is."

According to that passage, Aristotle was by no means "a very near relation" of Jesus. The two were as widely apart as the poles. Aristotle marks the starting-point of the scientific method of obtaining knowledge, which was a complete reversal of the Platonic method. It is true that we owe the term "metaphysics" to Aristotle; but Plato was the first great metaphysician. Plato began by assuming the existence of universals, which he called ideas, and from these he worked his way downwards to particulars. Aristotle, on the contrary, started with particulars, and arrived at universals only by the process of induction, and for him the universals existed, not independently like Plato's ideas, but in the particulars. Plato was a poet, a creator of imaginary realms, with whom the reason was the handmaid of the fancy; but Aristotle, while an ardent admirer of his master's poetry, was himself essentially a scientist, whose materials were facts, and whose guide in dealing with them was the intellect. Now, it is well-known that the famous Museum of Alexandria was established on the basis of Aristotle's method of studying Nature by experiment and observation. During the palmy days of the Alexandrian school marvellous discoveries were made in astronomy, mathematics, and physics, some of which were afterwards lost, and had to be remade in modern times. But while the Aristotelian philo-

sophy flourished religion languished. At Alexandria even the Jews forgot the God of their fathers and became sceptics. When the intellectual life of Alexandria began to decline, Aristotelianism was supplanted by Platonism, which eventually degenerated into Neo-Platonism. Then came Jesus and his apostles, who, in their turn, superseded Neo-Platonism by appropriating and assimilating much of its speculation and ethics. As the rise of Neo-Platonism meant the collapse of Aristotelianism, so the triumph of Christianity involved the downfall of Neo-Platonism. But the supremacy of Christianity was achieved not only by appropriating and assimilating certain elements from rival systems, but chiefly by subsequently suppressing such systems. The name of Jesus became the symbol of arbitrary power and cruel persecution. At the least sign of the resurrection of Aristotle the forces of Jesus were instantly set in operation to prevent such an undesirable event. The exercise of the reason was pronounced a crime punishable by horrible tortures and execution. What faith dreads most is knowledge, and it stops at nothing in its determination to nip it in the bud. It was in the name of Jesus that Senor Ferrer was shot in Spain the other day, because he was a sower of knowledge, a resuscitation of Aristotle. Wherever Christianity has the power it never fails to utilise it for the suppression of what it characterises as profane learning.

Fortunately, however, in Christendom generally, the tables are being rapidly turned. "J. B." says that "philosophy is the endeavor to make the world wiser," while "religion is the bold attempt to make the world better"; but the signal failure of religion to make the world better proves that the only way to make the world better is to endeavor to make it wiser. At the root of all existing evil is the lack of trained intelligence, the absence of mature wisdom. The world can be saved, not by faith in supernatural power, but by intelligent reliance upon powers that inhere in itself. To this truth the Churches are wilfully blind, and because society is being slowly permeated by this truth they are blindly marching to their doom. Jesus is passing, because Aristotle has returned, and is wiser and stronger than ever. In spite of all efforts to remould and adapt him to the new time, Jesus is passing, and the work which he claimed to be able, but miserably failed, to accomplish, is being vigorously taken in hand by his successor.

J. T. LLOYD.

Ingersoll.

BY GEORGE E. MACDONALD.

Tune, "Maryland."

YOUR stream of life majestic flowed,
Ingersoll, brave Ingersoll;
Your genius with pure lustre glowed,
Ingersoll, brave Ingersoll.
Your thoughts in words of light impearled,
Or in the tones of thunder hurled,
Have stirred the pulses of the world,
Ingersoll, brave Ingersoll.

The hand of want, the lips of pain,
Ingersoll, brave Ingersoll.
To you could not appeal in vain,
Ingersoll, brave Ingersoll.
Quick to relieve, strong to defend,
In sun and storm the loyal friend,
That e'en in death could comfort lend,
Ingersoll, brave Ingersoll.

The warmest clasp hand ever knew,
Ingersoll, brave Ingersoll;
The kindest voice that e'er rang true,
Ingersoll, brave Ingersoll.
To you we raise our song again,
To you we raise our song again,
And linger on that fond refrain,
Ingersoll, our Ingersoll.

Foundations Laid in Human Sacrifice.

By DR. PAUL CARUS.

PERHAPS the most persistent among religious superstitions from the beginning of mankind down into so-called civilised ages, has been the custom of offering human sacrifices and burying them in the foundation stones of important buildings, especially in the fortifications of cities. It is difficult to explain the underlying idea with certainty since in all cases of superstitious practices which date back to a remote antiquity we have no historical information as to the original theory of the custom. We only know that it continued, and that in later days different ideas prevailed. It is probable that the victim was a sacrifice offered to the deity, but we have also reason to assume that it was intended to serve as a guardian spirit who would protect the city from all harm.

In all these barbarous customs we must consider that the idea of killing a man, an infant, a woman, was not so terrible to the savage, for to him man's soul is immortal. He had not the slightest doubt that every being that died or was slain survived, and could at will put on another transfigured body, closely resembling his own. We might call it the dream-body, which was the figure in which he appeared to the survivors in dreams. This was supposed to move about as freely as we ourselves, and visit places at the most remote distances with unheard-of swiftness, and was not bound by the usual laws of gravity, or the rules of time and space. A person, whether infant or adult, that was sacrificed for some religious purpose was not supposed to be slain. He continued to live, and lived a kind of superior life—the life of a demi-god. He was transfigured into a spiritual presence that received divine honors, and so his condition was really envied. We may as well assume that originally the honor of being sacrificed was courted by many people, and the ghastly idea of the honor of such a death was absolutely present. But with the change of man's religious notions the practice became more and more horrible and outrageous. Their continued it because they considered it necessary. Their ancestors had done it to give stability to a building, and so the ceremony had to be done whatever might be the cost, and the further man grew away from his primitive barbarous ideas the more the victim shrank from it until finally he was forced to this unnatural death against his will.

Traces of burial alive have been found among all the nations of the earth without any exception, which indicates that the custom is as old as the art of architecture, and so under the most ancient buildings which date back to pre-Christian ages we find some human skeleton embedded under the foundation stones. It seems that in the progress of civilisation these horrible sacrifices were more and more discouraged because people may have felt instinctively that the custom was not right, and so the sacrifices which had been performed in ancient times were deemed to be sufficient even when fortifications were to be rebuilt. An exception was made, however, in case the city had been cursed in the name of the national deity. It was regarded as blasphemy to live in such a cursed city, for the man who dared to stay there disregarded the curse of his God. For instance, one of Job's friends, Eliphaz (Job xv. 28), counts it as one indication of a very reprobate man that he would live in such desolate cities. The curse pronounced on a conquered town which should remain destroyed forever, is recorded in Deuteronomy xiii. 16, where we read: "It shall be an heap forever; it shall not be built again."

When Jericho was destroyed at the special command of God, all its inhabitants were slain, "both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and ass," with the sole exception of Rahab, who had betrayed the city into the hands of the enemies of her countrymen. And Joshua adjured the people, saying:—

"Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."

Jericho, however, was sure to be rebuilt sooner or later, for, being the key to Palestine, and commanding the entrance into the country from the desert routes, it was too important both for commercial and strategic purposes to be left in ruins; and the man who undertook the work was still superstitious and savage enough to heed Joshua's curse. We read in the first Book of Kings, with reference to the reign of Ahab (Chap. xvi. 34):—

"In his days, Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid the foundation stones thereof in Abiram, his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son, Segub, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Joshua, the son of Nun."

It appears that the curse of Joshua on the city of Jericho had reference only to the fortifications of Jericho and not to the town itself, which is an oasis and an important station

for caravans (2 Sam. x. 5). The rebuilding of the city took place under Ahab, who governed from 876 to 853 B.C.

Some archæologists believe that the idea of burying alive is due to the notion that the forces of nature, be they gods, demons, or giants, and later in their stead, the Devil, were supposed to possess the privilege of collecting rent from mankind. The spirit of the soil was supposed to be the landlord, to whom payment was to be made by an offering of human life. Grimm says (*Mythology*, p. 109):—

"Frequently it was regarded as necessary to entomb within the foundation of a building living creatures and even men, an act which was regarded as a sacrifice to the soil which had to endure the weight of the structure. By this cruel custom people hoped to attain permanence and stability for great buildings."

There are innumerable stories which preserve records of this barbaric custom, and there can be no doubt that many of them are historical and that the practice continued until comparatively recent time. We read in Thiele (*Dänische Volkssagen*, I, 3) that the walls of Copenhagen always sank down again and again, although they were constantly rebuilt, until the people took an innocent little girl, placed her on a chair before a table, gave her toys and sweets, and while she merrily played, twelve masons covered the vault and finished the wall, which since that time remained stable.

Scutari is said to have been built in a similar way. A ghost appeared while the fortress was in the process of building, and demanded that the wife of one of the three kings, who should bring the food to the masons on the next day, should be entombed in the foundation. Being a young mother, she was permitted to nurse her baby, and a hole was left for that purpose, which was closed as soon as the child was weaned.

We read in F. Nork's *Sitten und Gebräuche (Das Kloster*, vol. xii.) that when in 1813 the ice broke the dam of the river Elbe, and the engineers had great trouble in repairing it, an old man addressed the dike-inspector, saying: "You will never repair the dike unless you bury in it an innocent little child"; and Grimm adduced even a more modern instance (*Sagen*, p. 1,095), which dates from the year 1843. "When the new bridge in Halle was built," Grimm tells us, "the people talked of a child which should be buried in its foundations."

So long did these superstitions continue after the cruel rite had been abandoned; and they were held, not only in spite of the higher morality which Christianity taught, but even in the name of Christianity. In Tommaseo's *Canti Popolari* an instance is quoted of the voice of an archangel from heaven bidding the builders of a wall entomb the wife of the architect in its foundation. The practice is here regarded as Christian, and it is apparent that there are instances in which Christian authorities were sufficiently ignorant to sanction it, for even the erection of churches was supposed to require the same cruel sacrifice; and there were cases in which, according to the special sanctity of the place, it was deemed necessary to bury a priest, because children and women were not regarded as sufficient. In Günther's *Sagenbuch des deutschen Volkes* (vol. i., pp. 33 ff.) we read that the Strassburg Cathedral required the sacrifice of two human lives, and that two brothers lie buried in its foundations.

The excavations in Palestine have brought to light such sacrifices in the foundation stones of ancient walls. In the foundations of a wall lying 2·30 metres under ground was found above the lowest layer of stones a jar 1·90 metres long and 40 in diameter, which was partly crushed by the second layer of stones. It contains the skeleton of a child and three clay vessels, presumably offerings made to the spirit of the victim, as it was customary even in the Middle Ages, whenever persons were buried alive, to give them rations of water and bread, which were placed in their tomb. The top of the wall was covered by a carefully made layer containing a canal to draw off the water lest the foundation stones be washed away. In the same place at Megiddo a whole cemetery of infants has been discovered, and it is not impossible that we have here the horrible instance of the offering of the firstborn, which is alluded to in Exodus xxii. 29:—

"Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give me."

The request of the firstborn as belonging to God is presupposed in Exodus xi. 4 ff., where Yahveh takes the first-born of the Egyptians, and also in the story of Abraham's sacrifice, where the offering of Isaac, his firstborn, is not completed, but a ram is substituted (Gen. xxii.).

In the progress of civilisation, the horrible practice of human sacrifices was more and more abandoned, and substitutes were made, first with animals and later with symbols. The excavators of the city of Gezer in Palestine have found human figures made of silver, which are obviously a

substitute for real human beings. They were embedded in the foundation stones in the same place where, in more ancient times, human skeletons were buried under the walls, in corner stones, and under the gates. Not infrequently we find dishes and lamps, which are placed in a curious way inside one another, or side by side.

Mr. Charles Hallock, in his interesting book, *Peerless Alaska*, speaks of the sacrifices which have been made even in our days among the Indians in these, our northern possessions. He says:—

"Slaves are often killed at 'house-warmings,' one being placed under each of the corner uprights when the frame was raised, the ceremony being sometimes attended with the greatest cruelty. With a house of irregular foundation lines the sacrifice of life was great."

Even in Europe the custom of burying victims in the foundations of important buildings continued long after Christianity had been introduced. Not a few of the most important buildings, especially castles and fortifications, frequently prove to have remnants of unhappy victims under their corner stones. For instance, the tradition is pretty well established that the foundations of the Kremlin, the imperial dwelling at Moscow, were laid in human sacrifices.

Gustave Freytag, in his novel, *The Lost Manuscript*, mentions the old custom of burying offerings in the foundation stones of new structures (p. 162). The hero of the novel, Professor Werner, searches for a lost copy of Tacitus, and hopes to find it in the foundation walls, where they were marked by a slab of peculiar form and color. On the removal of this slab he discovers the bones of a dog, which goes far to prove that the building was very old, for it was an evidence that the man who built it still deemed it necessary to have a living being entombed there as a substitute for the ancient human sacrifice of primitive times.

—Open Court (Chicago).

Mrs. Eddy's Rival.

NEW YORK CHRISTIAN SCIENCE LEADER "EXCOMMUNICATED."

A rupture has occurred in the Christian Science Church, which will probably result in a revolt from the mother church in Boston, presided over by Mrs. Eddy, and in there being an independent organisation, carried on here by Mrs. Stetson, who has, up to the present, been second to Mrs. Eddy in the councils of the denomination.

It is announced to-day that after a secret trial lasting for three days in Boston, Mrs. Stetson, the leader of the movement in New York, has been "excommunicated for rebellion against Mrs. Eddy." This matter has been coming to a head for some time, as Mrs. Stetson has been very popular in New York Christian Science circles.

It has been feared for some time by the "Eddy Cabinet," as the immediate advisers of Mrs. Eddy are called, that the New York leader was acquiring altogether too much influence and bade fair to supplant Mrs. Eddy herself, who, as everyone knows, is now a feeble old woman, and is regarded by many, including Christian Scientists themselves, as a "mindless puppet in the hands of conscienceless men." At any rate, charges were framed against Mrs. Stetson, and though her own particular church acquitted her, the mother church in Boston has condemned and expelled her.

Some of the charges brought against Mrs. Stetson are extraordinary, especially one which declares that she "endeavored to control and injure persons by invocations consigning them to evil and misfortune," and that Mrs. Stetson's "control over her students was such as to hinder their moral and spiritual growth." Also that she "turned the attention of her students away from the divine principles and made herself the intermediary in their communion with God."

It is now believed that the New York leader will take up the work on her own behalf, and start a strong rival organisation to that presided over by Mrs. Eddy.

—Daily Chronicle (New York Correspondent).

UPWARD REVISION.

One evening at family prayers the head of the house read the chapter which concludes with, "And the wife see that she reverence her husband." After the exercises had closed and the children had gone to bed, he quoted it, looking meaningly at his wife.

"Let us see what the Revised Version says on that subject," said she. "I will follow the new teaching, if you please."

The Revised Version was produced, and her chagrin may be imagined as the head impressively read, "And let the wife see that she fear her husband."

Acid Drops.

To say that a man is a Christian is to say nothing of any particular importance about him. The statement conveys no idea of how he will think or act in any given conditions. A stranger might imagine, after listening to Christian preachers and apologists that Christianity had discovered or even invented morality. How true this may be is seen by the hopeless divisions amongst Christians on political, social, and ethical matters. If their Christianity cannot bring them to one mind on these matters, and especially the last, its practical value as a guide to humanity is simply *nil*; for reason and good feeling would bring them together as far as they are now united. Even the Bishops in the House of Lords are divided over the Budget. The Bishop of Bristol goes for it tooth and nail. The Bishop of Hereford praises it to the sky. Yet both these gentlemen are endowed with the Holy Ghost. What is more, they have so much of the Holy Ghost in them that they can impart it to the crowd of men who enter what is called "holy orders." They are full, that is to say, to overflowing. How strange it is, then, that the Holy Ghost makes the Bishop of Bristol think one thing, and the Bishop of Hereford another thing. These right reverend fathers in God are directly opposed to each other, in spite of their special supply of the Holy Ghost. Who shall explain this? We fancy we can. There is no Holy Ghost at all. The Bishops are uninspired men, and they differ from each other because of their different intellectual and moral outfits. Just like ordinary men.

Rev. Lord William Cecil, rector of Hatfield, addressing the Coventry Branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, invited attention to China. "The revolution in the thought of China," he said, "was the Church's opportunity. He supposed no other age had ever seen such a vast opportunity as this. The thought of this vast population was, as it were, in the melting pot. Realise the size of it—400 million people..... He asked them to consider what it meant if Christianity did not take its place in China and they did not do their duty..... Let them suppose—though he did not think it was going to happen, owing to the activity of Christian bodies—that China accepted our civilisation without any of our Christianity in it. Suppose she listened to all the unbelievers and became essentially materialistic in her civilisation. The country's life would become one of low materialism, with no high morals in it, and nothing beautiful in it." This lordly man of God went on a good deal longer in the same strain. One would think that China needed the "high morals" of Christian countries. But she doesn't. She could give them all lessons in morality. This fact is well-known to travellers. It is concealed by the missionaries, who live by "moralising" the "heathen" who are frequently more moral than they are themselves.

Captain A. F. Townsend, author of *A Military Consul in Turkey*, has a chapter on Missionaries, in which the following occurs:—

"I remember having a conversation with a certain mutesariff, who wanted to know why the English and Americans sent missions to Mahometan countries. He was an unusually well-educated man, speaking French fluently..... His argument was to the effect that I could see for myself any evening in the streets a certain number of drunken men creating a disturbance, and that they were, without exception, Greeks, Armenians, or Syrian Arab Christians; and he went on to enumerate other crimes which were of common occurrence, and of which the perpetrators were Christians in nine cases out of ten.

He pointed out that all the disorderly houses in the town were kept by Christians, and ended by demanding whether the object of the missions was to turn Moslems into as great ruffians as the Christians."

Very pretty reading—for the missionaries.

Goetze's picture "He was despised and rejected," which has been exhibiting at Hanley, has led the Rev. Mark Bairstow, of that town, to point out that Christ is nothing to the modern world as represented in London. He says that the Savior is rejected by the people. Well, what is that but saying in effect that Christ was a failure, and that Christianity is a failure after nearly two thousand years' trial? It is no use laying the blame on the world. A religion that the world won't have must be an unsuitable religion. We have called Christianity the impossible creed, and so it is, for nobody can practise it and keep out of the workhouse, the lunatic asylum, or the prison. You may say it is too good for this world: but to be too good for this world is to be no good for this world. We want something practical as well as ideal. A man who shoots at the moon will never hit anything except by accident.

Many years ago the Rev. W. W. Howard, of Wellington, used to be fond of debating with Freethinkers. We see by the *Health Record* that he now has a fresh hobby. After a lecture at Sunderland on "The Science of Christian Healing" he invited anybody who had a pain anywhere to come up on the platform. A man came up with sciatica. "Having located the spot," the report says, "Mr. Howard offered up a few words of prayer." But he was not going to leave too much to the Lord, so he "placed his hands upon the lower part of the man's back, drawing them gently outward," and after three minutes of this treatment the pain disappeared. Very likely. But where did Christianity come in? It would puzzle a wiser man than Mr. Howard to tell.

The clergy do "get there," but about a hundred years after the Freethinkers. Rev. Joseph Deans has been lecturing at Bath on "The Story of the Flood." He solemnly told his audience (at this time of day!) that the Flood never happened; the story was a parable, in which every detail stood for some spiritual fact. The three decks in Noah's Ark illustrated the "three degrees of mind on the three heavens, natural, spiritual, and celestial." The sky-light window (there appears to have been only one!) taught that "in temptation all light came from the Lord alone," and the Lord's closing of the one door—if it was not the same thing as the window, after all—symbolised the divine care and protection. We suppose the water represented baptism, and Noah's "drunk" after the Flood represented the Holy Communion. We may be wrong, of course, but we are willing to be set right.

Ministers of religion are accurate now and then; witness the following passage from *Great Issues* by the Rev. Dr. R. F. Horton:—

"There is a loose assumption underlying most modern criticism of churches, that religion and morality are identical. But in reality no two things are in their beginnings wider apart. So far from being identical, their identification is a slow and arduous achievement. To accomplish that identification is the main purpose of human evolution."

The last sentence has not our endorsement. The substance of the other sentences has been stated scores—we might say hundreds—of times in the *Freethinker*. Morality has an independent origin of its own, and would have existed and developed if religion had never appeared. Religion had to come to terms with morality at a certain stage of human culture. Since then the evolution of religion has simply meant its giving way in every generation to the pressure resulting from the growth of morality in the previous generation. Religion does not purify morality. Morality humanises religion.

We see it stated by one of the religious weeklies that in fifty years Roman Catholic priests have increased in this country from 958 to 4,075, religious houses from 70 to 1,127, and Roman Catholic schools from 311 to 1,070. The paper from which we quote is much disturbed at these figures, although we can view them with considerable equanimity. While agreeing that the growth of Roman Catholicism is undesirable, we regard the growth of other forms of Christian belief as being little or less so. Moreover, Roman Catholics in this country are only increasing—if there is any increase—at the expense of other Christian bodies. They make no headway against Freethought; the absolute gains are all on the side of the latter. Long ago it was pointed out that the fight would be between Catholicism and Freethought, and with that we agree. Ultimately the Roman Church is the only church worth serious consideration, and because we believe this we agree that it is one of the deadliest menaces to civilisation. Other churches would be as bad if they had the same brains behind them and the same opportunities for mischief.

Christians are sanguine people. They expect to be kept alive and happy for ever and ever in kingdom-come. We don't wonder, therefore, at a *British Weekly* writer believing that "the green, low banks of the Medway are pressed every day by the feet of new Kiplings, Merediths, Tennysons, and J. R. Greens." Genius must be plentiful just now in Kent.

"What is the meaning of Christmas?" For the twelve best answers to this question the *New Theology* weekly offers twelve remarkably valuable prizes. Each winner will receive a copy of Mr. Campbell's *New Theology*. It ought to beat the missing word competitions. The person who wins one of these twelve is made for life.

We should be happy to supply the *New Theology* weekly with a sound (and lively) article for its Christmas Number on that same question. We know the right answer. But

we don't believe our pious contemporary wishes its readers to know it.

Pastor George Wise is in luck. He has been liberated by the Home Secretary in order that he may prepare his case and attend as a witness before the Commission of Inquiry into the Liverpool riots and the conduct of the Police. Pastor Wise will thus not do his four months' imprisonment, after all; but, on the other hand, he has given an undertaking that he will not speak at or take part in any public open-air meeting until the inquiry is over, and that he will do his best to help the authorities in restoring peace. He absolutely refused to give any undertaking before he went to prison. Perhaps the taste of prison life has made him a little more amenable. Anyhow, he *has* given an undertaking. He vowed he would never consent, but he has consented.

It is well that the Congo horrors should be denounced. But we do not think very much of the courage of the protesters at the Albert Hall meeting. The meeting was in the hands of clericals—Protestant clericals, and King Leopold is a Catholic. That means much. The Anglican and Nonconformist men of God on the platform, including the speakers, can shout against Leopold and Belgium without danger. They never hold a meeting to protest against the tortures and butcheries of the Czar. That might be dangerous.

The Abbé Brémond, who officiated at Father Tyrrell's funeral, in spite of that distinguished priest's excommunication, has made a retraction and submitted himself to Rome. Another weakling!

The Catholic Church still bans cremation. It is afraid to weaken the foolish orthodox belief in the resurrection of the body. But the German Protestant Churches are becoming aware of the fact that cremation is creeping in in spite of them. Crematoria have been erected by all the States outside Prussia, and now Prussia is also giving way to the new policy of disposing of dead bodies. A pronouncement in favor of cremation, at least as permissible, is expected very shortly from the Council of the Prussian Protestant Synod. Thus do scientific ideas gradually overcome religious prejudices.

John Wesley, it is now known, cast lots to see whether he should marry an American lady. The answer was negative, and he obeyed it, though with bitter sorrow. Heaps of Christians will laugh at this, but their laughter only shows how far they have left the Bible behind them. Casting lots is quite an orthodox practice in the Word of God.

The Hackney Coroner had to inquire into a remarkable death. A child of nine weeks was ill, and the parents, thinking it might die, and possibly go to the wrong place, sent for a clergyman to baptise it. The man of God poured water over the child's head, and this set up congestion of the lungs, the child dying of pneumonia. We suppose this ought to be called a death "by the act of God"—for the clergyman professes, and is believed, to be God's representative. Of course it is not the first case, by a long way, in which religion and common sense have been at variance. We cannot say that we ever knew them to be in agreement.

The Rev. T. E. Ruth, of Liverpool, is reported to have affirmed, at a special Free Church service recently held, that "matter was the child of the mind," and that "the great reality of the Universe was mind." Mr. Ruth indulged in a stronger expression still, if the report is trustworthy. He said that "the Universe was a mass of petrified thought." This is an interesting item of information, but before congratulating the reverend gentleman upon it we must ask him where and how he obtained it. This divine said something else, more astoundingly original, namely, that God drew the plan of the Universe, and that man built it. We know that man did *not* build the Universe, and we are fairly sure God did not design it. But, in any case, let us have Mr. Ruth's authority.

The Rev. J. H. Jowett is so completely obsessed by his own sense of infallibility that he regards all who differ from him as fools. He says: "I advise you to shun all blasphemy as you would the deadliest poison. Rather a thousand times be rankly superstitious than the victims of blasphemy." Of course, blasphemy means disbelief in, and active opposition to, whatever Mr. Jowett pronounces sacred; and, of course, he cannot be mistaken. We beg solemnly to inform the reverend gentleman that he is *not* infallible, and that non-believers in his creed are not necessarily blasphemers. Only a believer can blaspheme. It is a natural

impossibility to blaspheme against the non-existing. Mr. Jowett talks so foolishly simply because he does not take the trouble to understand. Adopting his own language, we advise him thus: "Do not play the fool with things beyond your comprehension."

General Booth's head gets more and more swollen. Speaking at the Empire Music Hall, Cardiff, with the Lord Mayor presiding, last Sunday, he pleaded for a fair chance for the Salvation Army. And what is a "fair chance"? Here are the great man's own words, as reported in the *Daily News* :—

"Let some big town be turned over to us with its prison, its workhouse, its lunatic asylum, and other institutions. Let the Army have the same money to manage them as is now given to the authorities that have charge of them, and I predict that in ten years you will see such a sight as will make the angels rejoice."

Then the angels must rejoice very easily. We know what Salvation Army management is. Look at the "sweating" at the London "shelter." Look at the frightful loss, which any private enterprise would be ashamed of, at the Hadleigh "Colony." A town in General Booth's hands would be bankrupt in twelve months. Happily he isn't likely to realise his wish, but the impudence of it is very characteristic.

An interesting point arose in connection with a recent prosecution in the West of England. The Rev. E. W. Poynton, rector of Kelston, near Bath, was fined £1, including costs, for too severely thrashing a boy named Billett. The thrashing took place in school during the time devoted to religious instruction, and was on account of an alleged offence committed out of school; and the reverend gentleman laid it on so unmercifully that the superintendent of police for the division said it would have been excessive punishment even in a criminal case. It was submitted, however, that the reverend gentleman had a right to thrash the boy, both as religious instructor and as rector of the parish. Fancy a parson, an apostle of the "God is love" gospel, having a special right to wallop boys! Who would have thought it? The magistrates didn't, anyhow.

There's many a true word spoken in jest—even when the jest is unintentional. A minister who was appointed to the chaplaincy of a gaol preached his farewell sermon to his old congregation from the text, "I go to prepare a place for you."

A writer in the *Christian World* says that the Rev. R. J. Campbell "found the Welsh head somewhat harder than he was led to believe." What a good Christian way of saying that Mr. Campbell's head was found to be softer than he believed!

Rev. R. J. Campbell's Progressive League is open for any number of members. "We should have no objection," he says, "to receiving the Pope and the Vatican." No doubt! And Peter's Pence too.

M. Anatole France, the great French writer, demands the exclusion of King Alfonso from the Astronomical Society of France because, in his opinion, the King of Spain is morally guilty of the murder of Senor Ferrer. If the Board refuses to take this line of action, M. France will tender his own resignation.

The Secretary of the Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews explains that the Society "does not aim at conversion, but only at putting Christianity before Jews." We understand now.

Mr. John Thomas Atkinson, solicitor, of Hill Field, Selby, Yorks, left the residue of his estate to the English Church Union. Over his own remains he ordered a crucifix to be placed, bearing the inscription: "Of your charity pray for the soul of John Thomas Atkinson, a sinner." We should be sorry to dispute the self-description, but we doubt if prayers for the dead gentleman's soul will do any good. We guess he's booked one way or another. If he believed in purgatory, he should have left cash to the priests, who are the only people that can pray souls through quickly.

Rev. James Bellamy, of Ingoldisthorpe, King's Lynn, left £335,470. Quite a whale in the great lake described in Revelation—if "blessed be ye poor" and "woe unto you rich" be true.

Another apostle of the poor Carpenter gone the wrong way. Rev. John Lewis Moiliet, of Abberley, Worcester, who died on August 18, left £12,718. "Woe unto you rich!"

We know where he is—or at least where he ought to be—now.

The terrible domestic tragedy at Wingate, Durham, illustrates the blessing of religion. The wife of Mr. James John Dodd, a well-known local solicitor, murdered her four children and tried to poison herself, while under the influence of religious mania. She thought she was obeying the will of the Lord.

More "Providence." The earthquakes and cyclones in the West Indies are found to have done immense damage. Many lives have been lost, and property destroyed to the value of millions. "He doeth all things well."

REAL INFLUENCE OF RELIGION.

Let me speak plainly. After my long experience, after my patience and forbearance, I have surely the right to protest against the untruth (would that I could apply to it any other word!) that evangelical religion, or any religion in a violent form, is a wholesome or valuable or desirable adjunct to human life. It divides heart from heart. It sets up a vain, chimerical ideal, in the barren pursuit of which all the tender indulgent affections, all the genial play of life, all the exquisite pleasures and soft resignations of the body, all that enlarges and calms the soul, are exchanged for what is harshly void and negative. It encourages a stern and ignorant spirit of condemnation; it throws altogether out of gear the healthy movement of the conscience; it invents virtues which are sterile and cruel; it invents sins which are no sins at all, but which darken the heaven of innocent joy with futile clouds of remorse. There is something horrible, if we will bring ourselves to face it, in the fanaticism that can do nothing with this pathetic and fugitive existence of ours but treat it as if it were the uncomfortable ante-chamber to a palace which no one has explored and of the plan of which we know absolutely nothing.—"Father and Son," *Epilogue*.

MAJORITY AND MINORITY.

Those who have thought most carefully and disinterestedly about the matter, are agreed that in advanced societies the expedient course is that no portion of the community should insist on imposing its own will upon any other portion, except in matters which are vitally connected with the maintenance of the social union. The question where this vital connection begins is open to much discussion. The line defining the sphere of legitimate interference may be drawn variously, whether at self-regarding acts, or in some other condition and element of conduct. Wherever this line may be best taken, not only abstract speculation, but the practical and spontaneous tact of the world, has decided that there are limits, alike in the interest of majority and minority, to the rights of either to disturb the other. In other words, it is expedient in certain affairs that the will of the majority should be absolutely binding, while in affairs of a different order it should count for nothing, or as near nothing as the sociable dependence of a man or his fellows will permit.—*John Morley*.

Testimonial to Mr. H. P. Ward.

MR. WARD, the respected and valued Organiser and Lecturer of the Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S., quits his sphere of usefulness here in January to take up similar work in the United States, and the members of the Liverpool Branch are wishful to present Mr. Ward with a Testimonial before he leaves us. We are informed that his friends in the movement throughout Great Britain would like to contribute to this laudable object, and thus show their appreciation of his efforts for the propagation and spread of Freethought. Our esteemed President, Mr. G. W. Foote, has kindly consented to insert this notice in the *Freethinker*, and I have been duly appointed treasurer and Mr. Martin assistant of the fund by the Committee of the Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S., and I shall be pleased to receive any subscriptions for this purpose to the end of December. All such donations will be duly acknowledged by me in the *Freethinker*. All donations to be addressed to me, John Ross, 13 Carlington-street, Liverpool.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 5, St. Pancras Baths, Prince of Wales-road, Kentish Town, London, N., at 7.30, "The Martyrdom of Ferrer."

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 5, Liverpool; 8 and 9, Bristol; 12, Manchester; 19, Public Hall, Canning Town.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 5, Holloway; 12, St. Pancras Baths; 19, Leicester.
- THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £27/ 4s. Received since.—Edward Jones, 10s. 6d.; T. M. Mosley, 2s. 6d.
- A. J. SMYTH.—Pleased to hear that your wife and daughter, as well as yourself, were much interested in our recent Manchester lectures. Rest of your letter attended to by shop manager.
- A. G. PROSS.—See paragraph. Thanks.
- EDWARD JONES.—Sorry to hear of your long indisposition, but glad to know that you are now mending.
- T. M. MOSLEY.—Glad you enjoyed yourself so much at Leicester when you went over there from Chesterfield to hear Mr. Foote Lecture. We believe Mr. Cohen was born at Leicester. Dr. Ballard is quite right in stating that we have said that God could not work a contradiction. A contradiction is words without a real meaning; that is, nonsense; such as a sour sweet, or a square circle, or two hills without a valley between them.
- G. MACHIN.—Glad you have so "much satisfaction" in reading the *Freethinker* after seven months' trial.
- D. WHITTY.—See paragraph. Thanks.
- T. R. GLOVER.—Huxley did utter that questionable paragraph about the Bible. It was in connection with his work on the London School Board in the early seventies. His friend Picton says that he lived to regret it. Certainly it was an unfortunate utterance. Pious gentlemen like Farrar have made the most of it ever since. They quote nothing else of Huxley's, but they never tire of quoting that. They are not honest, but they know their business.
- F. G. PORTSMOUTH.—Sent as requested. Glad to have your letter. Thanks for your efforts to make this journal known.
- B. G. BROWN.—Impossible this week, but will find room for a brief note if you send it on directly after Mr. Cohen's lectures.
- R. IRVING.—We are just seeing the new edition of *Bible and Beer* through the press. *Bible Heroes* will soon follow. Expect it for certain early in the new year.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- R. H. ROSETTI.—Glad the West Ham Branch has passed a strong resolution against the continued exclusion of the *Freethinker* from the Free Libraries, and hope it will have effect.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is 2 at 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 Manager of the Pioneer Press, 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, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Readers are asked to excuse any editorial shortcomings in this week's *Freethinker*. Mr. Foote has had to hurry off into the country in consequence of the rather sudden death of Mr. F. Bonte. He hopes to be in time for the funeral, but is half afraid he will be too late. Unfortunately the news did not reach Mr. Foote until after his return from his week-end visit to Birmingham.

Under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., two Sunday evening lectures are being delivered at the St. Pancras Baths, Prince of Wales-road, Kentish Town, London. Mr. Foote delivers the first lecture this evening (Dec. 5), taking for his subject "The Martyrdom of Ferrer." Many

"saints" have desired to hear the whole story of Ferrer's martyrdom and his work which led up to it, and this will be their opportunity; and so many lies have been told about Ferrer by the enemies of liberty and light that it is well to give the general public also an opportunity of learning the truth. North London Freethinkers should give all the publicity they can to this lecture, so that the large hall may be crowded.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd will deliver the second lecture of this St. Pancras Baths course. We hope the local "saints" will make his visit well known and secure him a hearty welcome.

Mr. Foote had grand meetings in the great Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday. The afternoon lecture on "The Martyrdom of Ferrer" was well reported in Monday's *Daily Post*, with a frank recognition of the "large audience." The evening meeting was still larger, and the lecture on "Shakespeare's Philosophy of Life and Death" was followed with intense interest and tremendously applauded at the finish. There was no music on these two occasions, as previously; the lectures were the only attraction, and such big enthusiastic audiences, in such circumstances, show the progress that Freethought is making in the Midlands capital. The N. S. S. Branch president, Mr. Fathers, took the chair at both meetings.

We may repeat the announcement that the Secular Society, Ltd., has secured St. James's Hall for Sunday evening lectures throughout January, February, and March. Another course of lectures is arranged for the Stratford Town Hall in January. And a course will probably take place at the Shoreditch Town Hall in April.

Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures in the Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street, Bristol, on December 8 and 9. The local "saints" should make his visit widely known.

Mr. Heaford lectures at South Shields to-day (Dec. 5) on Ferrer, and repeats the lecture at Gateshead (Co-operative Hall) on Monday evening at 7.30. Local "saints" please note.

Mr. Saphin had a good audience at the St. Pancras Baths on Sunday evening, when he lectured for the North London Branch, and his lecture was well appreciated.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 11, which happens to be the President's birthday.

The National Secular Society's Executive starts with a subscription of £4 (100 francs) an English contribution towards the Ferrer Fund which is being raised by the International Freethought Federation with a view to erecting a statue at Brussels of the Spanish Freethought martyr, and having it ready for unveiling in connection with the 1910 International Congress. Those who wish to subscribe should send to us direct, or to the N. S. S. secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

There are still some copies left of Mr. F. Bonte's spirited and effective poem entitled *Thaumaturgics: or, Wonders Ancient and Modern*. This is an eight-paged tract published at Mr. Bonte's expense for private circulation. It is an excellent thing for judicious distribution. Copies can be obtained for that purpose by applying to the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. The only charge is the cost of postage or carriage. Several thousands of copies have been distributed already.

A Kimberley reader of the *Freethinker* sends us an interesting and encouraging letter. "I am taking the pleasure of letting you know," he says, "that I am an enthusiastic reader of your splendid paper, and look forward to getting it every week. I have taken it for the last two years and a half; up to that time I had been a regular attendant at church; but a friend gave me Paine's *Age of Reason* and a few old copies of the *Freethinker* to read, and I had no more time for church or parsons after that. I questioned one parson on several points, and found that he had been teaching a lot of rubbish that he did not believe himself." This correspondent tries to get Freethought letters inserted in a local paper, but not successfully; still, he has been able to influence several friends in a Freethought direction, and he finds our *Bible Handbook* very useful. He says there are a good many Freethinkers in Kimberley, but they want rousing up.

Bible Stories Retold.

THE STORY OF DAVID AND ABIGAIL (1 SAMUEL XXV.). IT is said of Captain John Smith, whose name will ever be romantically associated with that of the Pocohontas maiden, that women fell in love with him everywhere. It is even reported that on one occasion a woman and her daughter both fell in love with the gallant captain simultaneously. Of Caius Julius Cæsar it is also affirmed that "twice was he married before he was twenty, and many times after." But neither Captain John Smith nor Caius Julius Cæsar can at all compete in romantic attachments or matrimonial alliances with King David of Israel. Among the many lovesick maidens who were victims to the Israelite's magnetic charms were numbered, at least, two king's daughters; while those of lower social status were, like the bargains in a draper's catalogue, "too numerous to mention." Abigail was not a princess like the Pocohontas maiden, but there are points of similarity in the story of each,—particularly the clandestine visit of both women to the distant abode of their hero,—that lends some interest to the comparison. The story of Abigail is certainly not less romantic than that of the Indian princess.

On the day that David made such a terrific slaughter of the Philistines, when the women came out of all the cities of Israel and danced before him on his victorious return, none were more enthusiastic in their voiciferous praise than Abigail, who was then just verging into womanhood. But it was with other and deeper feelings than those of patriotism that Abigail looked upon the young hero. It was a case of spontaneous affection—a psycho-physiological seizure known in modern fiction as "love at first sight." And while the patriotic feelings of the women naturally subsided after the event which had called them into play had passed, the tender passion that had been kindled in the bosom of Abigail burned with a consuming fierceness.

Abigail was one of the exceptions among the women of Old Testament history, as her parents had given her a good education. She had attended a young ladies' college, and undergone a course of mental tuition and physical culture; and the sacred narrative does not at all overrate her attractions when it says that she was "a woman of good understanding and of beautiful countenance." It may, of course, be a mere historical coincidence—we cast no reflection on the great English novelist—but the letter which Miss Pinkerton, in *Vanity Fair*, sent home with Miss Amelia Smedley, is almost an exact reproduction of the letter which Abigail carried home to her parents from the Principal of the college. Only, the deficiency in geographical knowledge, which is only casually mentioned in the case of Miss Smedley, is emphasised at some length in the letter of Abigail.

But while Abigail's parents were genteel, they were not by any means rich; and, ignorant of the romantic sentiment in the maiden's heart, they had already selected for her a very wealthy husband. Abraham Nabal, Esq., was a man of considerable substance, possessing five thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He had a country residence in the district of Maon, where Abigail's parents lived, but the headquarters of his farming operations were at Carmel. From the parents point of view, he was therefore a desirable catch; but as the life-long partner of an intellectual young woman he was about as suitable as one of his own goats. He was not only deficient in positive virtues, but he was coarse and vulgar in the extreme. In the language of the times, he was a base fellow, a son of Belial, and of such an irritable temper that one of his own servants said it was dangerous even to speak to him. And it was to such a specimen of the human species that the cultured Abigail was sacrificed. Incidentally, we may remark that it was this contrast between Nabal and Abigail that gave rise to the legend of Beauty and the Beast.

Shortly after their marriage, Abigail was one day sitting reading a little book on the language of flowers, with an appendix on the meaning of scriptural names, issued by a publishing house in Jerusalem, when she discovered that Nabal meant "fool." This was not at all a surprise to her, but only the confirmation of a melancholy fact of which she had all along been more or less conscious. But Abigail was a brave woman, and resolved to do her duty. She would be faithful to her husband, and in the daily performance of her household duties, perhaps in time (she thought) those tender feelings of her youth would be forgotten. Abigail's knowledge of the human heart, however, was like her acquaintance with the subject of geography—it was neither profound nor deep. And just when she thought she had drilled herself into a stoical indifference to her heart's demands, a little incident occurred which completely upset her psychological calculations, and played havoc with her moral resolves.

On a certain afternoon, she was doing some crochet work for a bazaar and thinking in a vague way of the life of dull, loveless monotony that lay before her, when a messenger arrived in hot haste with some very startling news. Nabal and his men were sheep-sheering in Carmel, and David, who was hiding from Saul with some of his men in a cave not far distant, had sent to civilly ask for a few sheep and goats wherewith to appease their hunger. The master, doubtless ignorant of David's fighting capabilities, had become abusive; but his servants were apprehensive of danger, and had sent off this messenger to the mistress. "Now, therefore," said that individual to Abigail, "consider what thou wilt do, for evil is determined against our master and against his house."

At the first mention of David's name Abigail's heart went pit-a-pat, and she could have kissed the messenger out of sheer joyous excitement. She had already determined what she would do before the servant had fully told his tale. She knew, of course, that if David once took her husband for a Philistine there would be neither man, woman, nor child, nor cat nor dog left of the house of Nabal by the morning light. Some of her young men were therefore despatched immediately to the mountain cave to stay the avenging hand, and inform David that their mistress was on the way to pay him a conciliatory visit. The messengers, luckily, were just in time, as David had already girded on his sword, and four hundred fighting-men were ready, waiting the order to Quick, march! The message had an electric effect on the outlaw; he dropped his sword; and, to pacify his followers for being balked of an encounter and its booty, David piously told them that "Vengeance belongeth unto the Lord." Even a Philistine at that moment would have been treated as a friend. The man after God's own heart had not seen the face of a woman for three whole days and three long nights (see also 1 Samuel xxi. 5), and to a man of David's temperament this was a terrible hardship indeed. So he paced up and down the cave like a restless Napoleon, until such time as the *faive ladye* should put in an appearance.

Abigail, of course, did not acquaint her husband of her intentions; indeed, if the truth must be told, she had nearly forgotten the old man's existence. She could not, under the circumstances, go to David empty-handed; besides, she had discovered, even at that early period, that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. David should not only have the sheep that he had asked for, but many dainties besides. And so the sacred narrative carefully enumerates the articles which she took as a present. These were: "Two hundred loaves, two bottles of burgundy, five sheep already dressed, four dozen boxes of 'Country Life,' five measures of parched corn, twelve trays of muscatels, seven pounds of Jordan almonds, and two hundred fig-cakes." The most difficult part of this preparation was the baking of the two hundred loaves of bread; and the cook, who was a somewhat stout female, was heard to remark at the close of the day, as she folded her

arms in her apron, "What a blessing the young missus does not go to see a handsome outlaw every day." The servants had never seen their mistress in such a state of animation before, but they were, of course, unaware of the double motive which was prompting her activities. She was going ostensibly on a mission of peace at the call of duty, but it was also one of those rare cases where the path of duty and the path of love lay in the same direction.

As Abigail, in high spirits, mounted upon an ass, drew near to the cave, David thought that Banbury Cross had never presented so fair a spectacle. He had come down by the covert of the mountain to meet the procession. And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, and lighted off her ass, and ran and fell on his neck, and—apologised for her impulsiveness. David understood. "My lord," said Abigail, "thine handmaiden would speak a word in thine ear." David was ever ready to oblige any lady who wished to whisper in his ear, so he led the way into the private sanctum. Spreading his cloak upon a ledge of rock, he prayed her to be seated. "My lord," said the fair visitor, "regard not that man of Belial, even Nabal; for he is a fool by name, and a fool by nature." "Yes," said David, "and right sorry I am to see such a handsome woman married to such a churl. And had it not been for thy timely and most welcome visit, Abigail, there had been neither cat nor dog left of the house of Nabal by the morning light. But now the affront is forgotten." Abigail was suffused with blushes, and David was not slow to perceive that they lent an added charm to her loveliness. Pouring out two glasses of the wine which Abigail had brought, he held one up to the dim light of the cave. "Your health and happiness, Abigail," said the gallant outlaw; "Come, drink to our next merry meeting! Have no fear, for see, *I have accepted thy person.*" (If we were writing a Play, this would be the place where the curtain would naturally fall, but as we are writing sober history we merely pass on to the next paragraph.)

After two days, Abigail arrived at home, to find that Nabal had also returned. He was indulging in a drunken carousal with some of his boon companions; and it was as risky to approach him when he was in his cups as it was for an inmate of the harem to appear, uninvited, in the presence of King Ahasuerus. But, in the morning, when the wine was gone out of him, Abigail told him that the man whom he had insulted was the renowned slaughterer of the Philistines; and Nabal received such a shock to think of what might have been his fate, that he never recovered. And the wealthy sheep-grazier was buried with his fathers. Nabal's extremity was, however, David's opportunity, and he forthwith sent some of his young men to bring Abigail home to be his wife.

The dream of Abigail's life was now to be realised, and saddling her ass, she set off with a light and joyous heart to be the wife of the hero of her youth. And as David in his strong arms lifted her bodily from the saddle, she felt that the cup of life's happiness was filled to overflowing. Never, since those days of blissful and innocent purity spent by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, had matrimonial affection reached such a height of intensity or of reciprocal satisfaction as was experienced by those two lovers during their three months' honeymoon in the mountains. And if this were a tale of fiction, we might here fittingly close the narrative; but we must follow the sacred historian in his narration of the painful facts of Abigail's later history.

The internal affairs of State demanding Saul's attention, he ceased to pursue David, who, with his retinue, removed from the mountain fastnesses to a neighboring city. And one day, shortly after they had settled down, David arrived at home with a *strange woman*. (Now Abigail was a Carmelitess.) And proceeding to the kitchen where Abigail was cooking, he said, "Allow me to introduce you to Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess. Henceforth she will sup at our table and—and sleep here." Abigail smiled a sickly smile: it was a cruel blow. We must not,

however, judge this action of David's by standards of modern conventionality. It was not that he loved Abigail the less, but only that he loved Ahinoam the more. And if when these two wives are subsequently mentioned, it is always in the order of "Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, the Carmelitess," it is not because of any decided preference on David's part for his additional helpmate. The reason is that, while Abigail was given a long start, it was Ahinoam who reached the maternal winning post first, and became the mother of David's first-born (2 Sam. iii. 2-3). But although Ahinoam carried off the maternal honors, Abigail came in a very good second, and amid the joys of maternity all the little petty jealousies of the situation were forgotten. Abigail and Ahinoam really got on very well together, and they might have remained a happy family had it not been for the expansiveness of David's affections. It was not long before he brought another lady home, and requested that she too be provided with a bedchamber. And much to Abigail's chagrin, he kept on adding wives to the household; one of the additions being a daughter of Talmai, the king of Geshur. Abigail had always remained on friendly terms with Ahinoam, but she did not take kindly to these other women; and especially did she object to the airs and graces of the daughter of the king of Geshur, who wanted to rule the roost. She determined to speak to David, although an interview was not easily obtainable owing to the demands on his time. But she waited her opportunity; and coming upon him one day seated alone in the garden, she said, "David, I have somewhat to say unto thee." And he said, "Say on." "Well, it's about the women's quarters. Really, we are getting overcrowded; there is scarcely room in the nurseries for all the children's cradles. And I was going to suggest that if you bring any more strange women into the place, that you add a new wing on to the premises." David promised to have the matter attended to, and as they were alone, he sealed his promise with a kiss; which made Abigail sigh for the old days when she was the sole recipient of his affections. "And while we are alone," said Abigail, "I would like to ask, David, how you interpret the seventh commandment?" "Well," said David, "you know that when you are in Rome ——" "But," pleaded Abigail, "do you think that such a method of preserving the sanctity of the home life would meet with the approval of the Bishop of Durham?" "I am not sure," said David, "that I quite understand the Bishop's peculiar views; but I feel sure, Abigail, that my efforts to combat the Malthusian tendencies of the age would secure the episcopal sanction of the Bishop of London."

David did not add a new wing to the building, but, instead, he shortly afterwards removed to larger and more commodious premises in the city of Jerusalem. The house of Saul was now rapidly declining; but David's power in the State was increasing. And in order to settle the issue between them, some of the chief men waited upon David to ask him to take the royal command. He agreed on one condition: that they would restore to him his first wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, to share his conjugal affections. Abigail and Ahinoam watched the arrival of Michal, upon a white ass, with sorrowing hearts. This now made seven wives in all, although David was not yet thirty years of age. It was at that age that he began to reign: and perceiving that the Lord had established him king over Israel, he "took unto himself more wives and more concubines" (2 Sam. v. 13).

Poor Abigail! The romance of her life was now but a dream of the past; and had it not been for the friendship of Ahinoam her later years would have been miserable indeed. By and by, her health began to fail; long confinement in the harem had weakened her constitution. In its crowded apartments she felt lonely of heart; but it was in vain that she sighed for the comforts of a husband's affection,—the jealousies of the harem forbade the display of any such tenderness on David's part. And

one day, when Abinoam and she were alone, with a deep-drawn sigh, she exclaimed: "Oh, that I had lived in happy Christian England, where there are no harems and no concubines, and where every husband is religiously faithful to the legal wife of his bosom."

And the parrot on his perch overhead was heard to remark: "I always knew that Abigail's knowledge of geography was woefully defective."

JOSEPH BRYCE.

A Suggestion to the Pope.

POPE PIUS X.,—You are about to confer a cardinal's hat upon some American priest. Though this matter is absorbing much of your time and attention, I am going to ask a favor of you: I appeal to you because Spain is one of the countries of which you are the real ruler. By your influence over Alphonso, who, though king, is your obedient servant, you control the destinies of that land. Not a sparrow falls to the ground in Spain without your knowledge and consent.

My petition is this: I pray you to bring about, as quickly as possible, the publication of all the charges against Ferrer, and his answer to these charges, that the world may know why he was killed. Although you cannot bring him back to life, you can help to vindicate his memory if he was innocent, or to vindicate the Church if he was guilty. To do this I suggest that you invite a properly constituted Civil Tribunal to hear in public the evidence for and against Ferrer. Of course, this should have been done before he was killed, but is it too late to give a satisfactory explanation to the hundreds of thousands who, all over the world, are asking, "Why was Ferrer killed?"

You may reply that Ferrer has already been tried by martial law. But do you not know that martial law, as the Duke of Wellington has said, represents no more than the caprice of military officers? Was not Dreyfus condemned by martial law? Dreyfus was helped to life and freedom again. But you were not one of his helpers.

Let me warn you kindly, Pope Pius, that there is a limit to the patience of the people. You are to-day afraid to appear in the streets of Rome because of the hatred of the masses for your office and person. Why can you not try to change their hatred to respect, and their opposition to devotion to your cause? Play fair, and the whole world will honor you. But if you continue to fear progress, and imagine that by curses and excommunications you can make the modern world look to you as a father, even with the "holy" left out—you will one of these days be rudely awakened out of your dream. Already there are many signs that Italy is seriously thinking of asking you to look for a home elsewhere. This will compel you, perhaps, to seek an asylum in some Protestant country. Will not that be a great humiliation? But if you are compelled to flee from Rome, and if the papacy should fail, Francisco Ferrer will be one of the causes of its downfall. His blood cries from the ground for justice. He is not the only dead whose ghost will haunt the papacy,—and haunt it out of the world of culture and progress. Remember Giordano Bruno. Remember Hypatia. Remember Joan of Arc. You have apologized to this last, but it took you five hundred years to do it. Do not let another five hundred years elapse before you let in the daylight on the murder of Francisco Ferrer.

M. M. MANGASARIAN.

Gipsy Smith's Saving Chicago.

CHICAGO'S 22nd street red-light district was jammed last night as it never had been before in the history of the city. At least 25,000 persons, many of them strangers, packed the streets while "Gipsy" Smith led 8,000 or more ardent followers up and down the darkened avenues. Thousands in the crowd of lookers-on proved to be good spenders, and as a result the saloon-keepers, one and all, said their business for the same hours in a single night was unprecedented, except possibly on festive New Year's occasions. Other resorts reported corresponding success in the matter of receipts.

"I haven't done as much business in a single night since I have been located in this district," declared a well-known saloon-keeper in the neighborhood. "Men and women that I haven't seen in ten years, and others that never were in the place before, came into it to-night. They will all be back again, and the parade has shown them that we are still alive. The 'gipsy' helped us out after the trimming the chief of police gave us in his new vice-regulation rules."

Resorts on the line of march had their doors locked and their fronts darkened while the parade was in progress. As it ended they flashed into lights, and the waiting thousands poured through the doors. First came the crowds on the streets. Later, dozens who had marched in the parade and attended the revival service which followed found their way to the "bad lands" and into the interior of the resorts, whose darkened fronts during the actual progress of the parade had afforded slim satisfaction to their ambition to "look over the district."

Men and women, a majority of them strangers among the faces of the habitués of the district, began arriving early in the evening. The vantage ground was 22nd and State streets, where the procession was expected to turn and strike west through the resort area.

When the march started from the armory at West 34th street and Wentworth-avenue at 9.30 p.m., this corner was a struggling mass of humanity with a detail of uniformed patrolmen and detectives working in vain to clear the street. Automobiles were backed up to the curb, street cars clattered through on their regular trips, sidewalks were jammed with men, women, and children, and from the adjacent saloons floated the strains of the raucous orchestras and singers. In the crowds the painted women with their boisterous escorts mingled and jostled elbows with the aged women and girls, the young couples and the well-meaning enemies of vice who were drawn there to "do good."

It was after 10 p.m. before the glow of red fire far to the south warned the watchers that the parade was on its way. Frantically the police pushed and shoved a narrow lane through the crowds. At the last minute it had been decided to continue down State-street to Archer-avenue, and then wind back and forth on Dearborn-street and Armor-avenue instead of crossing on West 22nd-street.

At the head, in the centre of a compact group of a hundred policemen and singing men and women, which opened a lane through the walls of spectators, marched "Gipsy" Smith. As the parade crossed 22nd-street into the "bad lands" a newspaper photographer boomed a flashlight. The two Salvation Army bands and the Moody church band struck up a tune, and the marching thousands broke into song.

"Where He Leads Me I will Follow" was the favorite air of the marchers. In many tunes, and with as many degrees of vigor, the marchers intoned the words. Occasionally the droning words were varied by those of "Come to Jesus" and "Where is My Wandering Boy To-Night?"

On the side lines the crowd took up the song with varying moods. One enthusiastic youth at the corner of State and 22nd-streets joined in all of the songs.

"Join us, brother; follow Jesus," urged one of the marchers who heard him.

"Haven't time, old sport; my feet are too sore to march, but my lungs are all right," retorted the singing enthusiast.

"Oh you red light," echoed another as a marcher touched a match to a torch.

As the end of the procession passed 22nd-street the crowd of spectators made a rush for Dearborn-street, where the marchers were going south and turning to Armor-avenue. Here it was in the heart of the red-light district.

Steps of the resorts along the street were crowded with spectators. On the sidewalks was a struggling mass trying to go in either direction. In the centre of the block stood a group of detectives, experienced in years of travel in the levee district.

"There's a girl getting her first introduction to red lights," commented one, as a young man with a bright-faced girl endeavored to enter one of the locked doors.

"We'll come back later, for you must see them now that you're out here," was the young man's remark, overheard as they turned away.

Environment to the nurture of character is what food may be to a plant: it cannot alter intrinsic attributes, but it can develop or dwarf, encourage or deaden, incite or restrain.—*Eden Phillpotts*.

"Great night for pickpockets," added the detective. "We have as much chance of catching them on a dark night like this as finding needles in a haystack."—*Chicago Daily News*.

Correspondence.

"JOHN BULL" AND PIGOTT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I read with some surprise "N. S. F.'s" letter in your last issue. The poor man seems filled with wrath against "John Bull" because it exposes Pigott and his vile practices, —a state of mind I cannot understand in an Atheist on such a matter. His arguments, too, in some instances, are rather amusing. His chief grievance seems to be that "John Bull" panders to the Christian Church. Well, I, as a militant Freethinker, have never detected it doing so. I have rather gloried in its outspoken attitude towards the Church. Perhaps the reason "N. S. F." imagines this is because he is as bigoted in his Freethought as a Baptist parson in his Christianity. "N. S. F." also forgets that "John Bull" is not a Freethought, but a political, journal.

Now for his arguments. He says Pigott "has chapter and verse, and the whole Bible behind him to support his mode of living." Is that any reason why his vile practices should continue? It seems strange for an *Atheist* to advance such a reason. I should have thought he would be only too pleased to see a journal like "John Bull" bringing such matters before the public. "N. S. F." also asks why "John Bull" does not attack the Catholic Church. It *does*, when it has reliable information of anything shady, as "N. S. F." must know if he is a regular reader. "N. S. F." says, too, that the knowledge he possesses of Pigott "and his following is that, in spite of their extremely Christian mode of life, they are a peaceful and law-abiding community." The knowledge I possess is directly opposite. How can a community which indulges in such beastly and immoral practices be called "law-abiding"? I live within a few miles of the "Abode of Love," and have information on good authority which shows me that "John Bull" is not so *very* far wrong in its charges.

Before I conclude I should like to say, as a Freethinker, that I believe in all things being subjected to sensible criticism, but I do not consider "N. S. F.'s" letter either good taste or common-sense argument.

I agree with the editorial footnote which states that many papers make more than is necessary of the "Abode of Love" during their slack season, but I do not know of another journal which has so openly charged Pigott with immorality as "John Bull" has done. I consider the *Freethinker* and "John Bull" the two most outspoken journals in this country.

Trusting I have not taken up too much of your valuable space, and thanking you in anticipation of the insertion of my letter.

S. BRADBURY.

Change in Russian Time.

INGENIOUS CONTRIVANCE FOR MEETING CLERICAL DIFFICULTY.

ACCORDING to the "Pester Lloyd," the Russian Holy Synod and its clergy have finally decided to withdraw their opposition to the introduction of the New Style. As everyone knows, the Russian calendar is thirteen days behind the rest of the world, the Greek Church still adhering to the Julian or Old Style introduced in the time of Julius Cæsar, which made the year eleven minutes and ten seconds too much. The New Style now to be adopted was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII. in 1582, when the Pope simply suppressed ten days, which have now grown to thirteen. The objection hitherto of the Russian clergy has been that by adding thirteen days to their date they blot out thirteen days, on each of which some particular saint must be honored. This objection will now be overcome by a very ingenious arrangement. In every month of next year one particular day will be appointed which is to be reckoned as two days. For example, at 12 o'clock on the night of January 1 January 2 begins, and lasts until the same time of the next following night. The Russian reformers propose that at midday of January 2 January 3 is to begin, and to last for twelve hours only, when the 4th will begin. This process will be continued for thirteen months, at the end of which the dates for Eastern and Western Europe will be the same. And the thirteen Greek saints will have had their day, though somewhat curtailed.—*Daily Chronicle*.

REMEMBRANCE OF THE DEAD.

How many have gone down by different paths
Into the tomb's chill bed; how many tombs
Of nations, too, have passed away, beneath
The suns and winters, or beneath the feet
Of other younger nations who, amid
Alternate war and revelry, moved on
To History's first bounds! Alas, alas,
To think of all the joy and all the woe,
Which, since the dawning of the human race,
Have, infinite and fated, swept across
This ample earth, on which we too now pass
Mere pilgrims of a day! Myriads who now
Have reached those sunless wastes, whence never
'Tis granted to return; the silent ghosts, [more
Evoked at moments by the intellect,
But in whose veins the living blood once rushed
Impetuously on. Upon those dead
'Tis well to ponder long; but most of all,
Deep in the heart, to dwell upon the few
Who, by our side, around the quiet hearth
Once spent their days. Oh ponder on the dear
And honored snowy locks,—the infant's eyes,
So full of life, that seemed to mirror Heaven,—
The youth's brave ardent spirit,—or the soft
And modest tresses,—which one fatal hour
Has snatched away for ever! Let us next
With solemn love, look back upon the Dead,
Upon the men who onward led our race
To nobler shores. And bowing down before
Primeval sepulchres and new-made graves,
Before the ancient and the recent mould,
Then let us in a single long embrace,
Both kin and friend enfold. Ye virgin souls,
Ye upon whom ne'er fell a single seed
That was not all consistent with the Faith
Held by your timid mothers,—and not less
Ye other souls, with thought's long struggles worn,
Ye who in certainty immutable
Have safe asylum found,—oh, t'wards the Cross
Extend your arms! And ye who on that Cross
See a mere man, but have not yet denied
In Heaven above the presence of a God,
Now, from the heart's remotest depths, oh breathe
A prayer for all these dead! And ye who cry
That by blind laws the universe pursues
Eternal alternations,—ye, the bold
Explorers of the Cosmos,—oh recall
Ye, too, these dead! If to the sightless All
They wholly have returned, oh let them live
A second life in your remembering hearts!

—*Arnaboldi, translated by Eugene Lee-Hamilton.*

Waiting is—what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
—Where is the blot?

Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,
—Framework which waits for a picture to frame.
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering with nought they embower!
Come then, complete incompleteness, O comer,
Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!

Breathe but one breath
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love! —*Robert Browning.*

THE DOOM OF RELIGION.

This Cleveland working man, killing his children and himself [through unemployment and starvation], is one of the elemental stupendous facts of this modern world and of this universe. It cannot be glazed over or minimised away by all treatises on God, and Love, and Being, helplessly existing in this monumental vacuity. This is one of the simple irreducible elements of this world's life, after millions of years of opportunity and twenty centuries of Christ. It is in the mental world what atoms or sub-atoms are in the physical, primary, indestructible. And what it blazons to man is the imposture of all philosophy which does not see in such events the consummate factor of all conscious experience. These facts invincibly proves religion a nullity. Man will not give religion two thousand centuries or twenty centuries more to try itself and waste human time. Its time is up; its probation is ended; its own record ends it. Mankind has not æons and eternities to spare for trying out discredited systems.—*Morrison I. Swift.*

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.

INDOOR.

ST. PANCRAS BATHS (Prince of Wales-road, Kentish Town, N.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Martyrdom of Ferrer."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Church-street, Upper-street, N.): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Charles Bradlaugh as I Knew Him."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public Hall (Minor), Barking-road, Canning Town): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Religion and Life."

OUTDOOR.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 (noon), Walter Bradford, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street): C. Cohen, Wednesday, Dec. 8, at 8, "Christianity and Modern Thought"; Thursday, Dec. 9, at 8, "Spain Under the Crescent and Cross: a Chapter in the History of Civilisation."

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY (Club Rooms, 12 Hill-square): 6.30, a Debate.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): J. McCabe, 12 (noon), "Christianity and Marriage"; 6.30, "The Evolution of Morality."—I. Lantern illustrations.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Edward Clodd, "When Did Man Become Religious?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): C. Cohen, 3, "The Barbarisms of Civilisation"; 7, "The Origin and Decay of God."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road. All Saints): 6.30, Dr. J. A. Young, "Our Secret Friends and Foes."

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Hall, Whitehall-road, Gateshead): Monday, Dec. 6, at 7.30, W. Heaford, "The Martyrdom of Ferrer."

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Vegetarian Café, Nelson-street): 7.30, M. J. Charter, "Should the House of Lords be Abolished?"

NOTTINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Cobden Hall, Peachey-street): 7.30, Debate between J. Long and W. Shepperd, "Is there a God?"

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Royal Assembly Hall, Ingham-street, Mile-end-road): 7, W. Heaford, "Francisco Ferrer: Educationalist, Thinker, and Martyr."

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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