

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXII.—No. 1

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 1912

PRICE TWOPENCE

*Wild imaginations form systems, which weak minds adopt implicitly, and which sense and reason oppose in vain; their voice is not strong enough to be heard in schools of divinity.*—LORD CHESTERFIELD.

## Mr. Harold Begbie on Himself.

THERE is an old story of a London 'bus-driver who had a day's holiday and spent it in driving another jarvey's 'bus. So great is the power of habit, so much is man subdued to what he works in. And it is on this principle, we presume, that Mr. Raymond Blathwayt, the well-known journalist, went off to interview Mr. Harold Begbie, another well-known journalist. It was on the subject of religion, and it appears in a weekly paper which is rather curiously called *Great Thoughts*, under the heading of "The Religion of a Journalist."

It puzzles us why the religion of a journalist should be of special importance. The subject is one on which few journalists are ever called upon to write, except perhaps incidentally, when business is slack and they have to stalk Messiah Piggott or some other temporarily distinguished Christian. Why should a journalist's religion—merely as a journalist—be more important than a chimney-sweep's religion, or a navy's religion, or a dustman's religion? In a good many cases the journalist might easily be the least thoughtful of the four.

We have another word to say before dealing with a point or two in this journalist's interview with a journalist. There is a nice portrait of Mr. Begbie in the midst of the letterpress. He is a good-looking gentleman. We think "the ladies" would admire him. He might be a heart-breaker. But he would never be a thinker. His face is (relatively) too long and his forehead (relatively) too short. The eyes show fluency of expression, and that seems to be the secret of Mr. Begbie's success. We hope this is not too personal; but, after all, if a man lets his portrait appear as an accompaniment to his opinions he can hardly quarrel if it suggests phrenological reflections.

Mr. Blathwayt assures us that Mr. Begbie is "one of the leading thinkers of the modern Press in London." This may be true,—and trifling; for who in his senses would seek for "thinkers" in the modern London press—even if you spell it with a capital P?

A writer may be known by a single sentence. We remember in our young days coming across the works of the "judicious Hooker." We opened it and read the first sentence: "If for no other reason, yet for this—" That was enough. We said to ourselves "This man is a born writer." Mediocrity would never begin like that. Such an opening showed the boldness of genius.

Let us take a sentence of Mr. Begbie's: "And there is another strong and vigorous idea in my mind, and it is this": etc. This is not the work of a born writer, but the work of a born scribbler. "And" and "another" are substantially tautological. The sentence begins properly with "There." "Strong" and "vigorous" in relation to an idea are also tautological, being perfectly synonymous. This

is the usual style of "the modern press of London." Always use two or more words where one would do, and the more "strong and vigorous" you look to the ignorant, and the sooner you reach the limit of your allotted space.

Mr. Begbie the thinker is a match for Mr. Begbie the stylist. The first advantage of religion, he says, is *happiness*. It was the want of religion that "cast John Davidson, the brilliant poet and critic, into the waters of destruction and oblivion." Tautology again! unless the writer means that John Davidson destroyed his reputation as well as his life. In that case, the observation is an impertinence. It is not given to Mr. Harold Begbie to decide the immortality of authors. His opinion of John Davidson is of no value whatever. Not more valuable, perhaps, but certainly more interesting, would be John Davidson's opinion of Mr. Begbie. As for the theory that John Davidson's suicide (under the stress of cancer supervening upon chronic asthma) was the result of misery arising from want of belief in God, it is enough to say that plenty of believers in God have been very miserable men—and most miserable when most under the power of religion. Look at the great Pascal, in France; look at the sweet and tender Cowper, in England. Cowper attempted suicide more than once; Pascal tortured himself into an early grave.

We now come to the essence of the gospel according to Begbie. It is the "strong and vigorous" idea already referred to:—

"Without religion there is no logic in virtue and no reason in aspiration of any kind. 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.' The materialist who lives a virtuous life is the most incomprehensible and irrational creature among us; for sin *is* pleasant, the gratification of the lusts of the flesh *is* a happiness, so that if we believe neither in God nor a Hereafter and are utterly without religion why should we lead a life of painful restraint and self-sacrifice? The materialist likens us to the animals, but he refuses to live like a pig; he compares us with the birds, but he will not advocate the morals of the poultry yard.....Without the restraints of religion you cannot think of a social existence for the human race."

Mr. Begbie reminds us of a certain story. An American Christian said to an American "infidel," "Why, sir, if I believed, like you, that there is no God and no Devil, no heaven and no hell, no reward and no punishment hereafter, I should be the worst man on earth; I should drink and lie and cheat, and commit adultery, and hardly stop short of murder." The "infidel" looked him up and down for a minute, and then said, "I believe you would." Yet the Christian was not pleased with being so promptly taken at his word.

It is a pity that pious gentlemen like Mr. Begbie will write out their own characters in this way. There was an old Restoration comedy entitled *She Would If She Could*, and Dr. Johnson said "we know what she would be at." We also know what Mr. Begbie would be at. We condole with him on having to practise so much "painful restraint and self-sacrifice" in order to live decently. His chief consolation, we suppose, is that of the poor old woman, a sort of pious Mrs. Malaprop, who consoled herself by thinking of "the glorious 'immorality' to come."

G. W. FOOTE.

## New Year Resolutions.

IT is an old-fashioned custom to start the New Year with a stock of good resolutions. I do not know that there is usually a very serious intention of carrying them into practice; but they are made, nevertheless. Perhaps they are made for the same reason that Mark Twain once recommended the cultivation of certain harmless vices—so that they may be thrown overboard in times of stress. Personally, I have known a great many people who made good New Year resolutions, and about an equal number who never kept them. Moral energy has a knack of getting dissipated in the contemplation of one's own perfections, and mouthing the desire for personal improvement seems a fairly effectual method of preventing its realisation.

Still, there are a number of New Year resolutions that I, for one, would like to see made and kept. Consider, for instance, what would be the consequence of even a fair proportion of the clergy of England resolving that during 1912 they would say only what they believed, and would say *all* they believed. Such a resolve would carry with it the greatest revolution that any Church has ever experienced. For the probability is that in no Church the world has seen, certainly not in a Christian Church, has this condition obtained. Legal and social terrorism, and the fear of losing social or financial security, have combined to prevent an established clergy from expressing their real convictions on the subject they are authorised to teach. Historically, the clergy are represented as the tyrants of the lay mind. And so they have been, and are. But they, too, are tyrannised in turn. Either their superiors in office, or the law, or the congregation, act as a bar to a clergyman's freedom of speech on religious matters. They become the victims of the machine they help to drive, and are held in check by a narrowness of mind they themselves create and strengthen. Here and there one finds a clergyman breaking loose and vindicating his independence and his manhood. And, of course, a certain number are never sufficiently alive, mentally, to have any intellectual qualms. But thousands go on year after year either preaching things they *know* to be untrue, or preaching only a part of what they believe to be the truth. A resolve on the part of the clergy to speak out fully and fearlessly would soon consign to oblivion nine-tenths of current Christian doctrines.

A New Year's resolution in favor of courage and plain speech might well be made by many others besides the clergy. Many scientific men would be the better for such a resolve faithfully discharged. There is something in our whole social atmosphere that breeds mental hesitancy, and the timidity of English scientists contrasts unfavorably with many of their continental fellow-workers. To those who rightly appreciate prevailing conditions, the mere silence of so many scientific men in matters of religion is highly significant. It is evidence that their opinions on that subject are not of a very strenuous character. A perfectly unequivocal deliverance one hardly ever gets. The trouble taken by Huxley to coin the word "Agnostic" when a term properly descriptive of his opinions was ready to hand, is symptomatic. Emile Boutmy well says that men like Huxley, Spencer, Darwin, and Tyndall would in France have been called, and would have called themselves, Atheists; and no one would have expected anything else. But we do these things differently in England. Here, no matter at what cost, the goddess of respectability must be placated.

A striking example of mental hesitancy is furnished by the vast majority of anthropologists. In this science England occupies a premier position. And the logical implications of anthropological investigations are fairly obvious. To an unbiassed mind it would seem that, once religious beliefs have been traced to their source in the mistaken guesses of primitive man, all question of the *truth* of religion is

settled. And the obvious next step would be to connect current religious ideas with primitive religious ideas, and show how one developed from the other. But this is just the step that nearly all of our leading writers decline to take. Worse than all, after showing that religious ideas rest upon delusion, many stultify themselves by lengthy dissertations concerning the "essential truth" of religion—as though a blunder can ever become anything but a blunder, no matter how great the elaboration. Or, with equal fatuity, they protest that religious ideas are outside the domain of science altogether. But if their own analysis of the religious ideas of primitive races be sound, the question of the truth of religion is already answered in the negative. One may decline to accept the researches of men like Tylor, Spencer, and Frazer, and confess to a certain agnosticism in relation to religion. But how on earth can one do this and accept their teachings? There is really nothing to be Agnostic about. If religion really began in the crude, uninformed speculations of the savage, the case against the truth of religion is decided beyond the possibility of revision. What we now need is a greater readiness of anthropologists to face the logical results of their own researches.

Still more necessary is it to connect current religious ideas with primitive beliefs and practices. To careful students this is already done. But the majority of readers are not careful students; and it is quite common to find people who are fairly well acquainted with primitive religious beliefs, but who quite fail to see their connection with modern religion. And yet it is in this connection that their whole value lies. Almost the whole significance, for example, of Frazer's researches into the practice of god-making lies in connecting it with the Christian belief in a crucified Savior. Or, again, the importance of Tylor's and Spencer's researches into the origin of the idea of a soul is that we still have the belief in a soul with us. Yet it is just at the point that is most vital that most writers stop. They trace these notions in uncivilised and semi-civilised humanity, and there they stop. If our scientific anthropologists will for a time take their courage in both hands, and show their readers in plain and unmistakable language that current Christian doctrines of a soul, of a God, and of a crucified Savior rest upon no other and better foundations than the beliefs of the very savages we set out to Christianise, they will have given their most important contribution to the mental emancipation of the civilised world.

To come nearer home, one would like to see all those who *are* Freethinkers resolve that during 1912 they would make the world acquainted with the fact. I do not mean by this that they should make themselves as great a nuisance as the religious propagandist, only that they should not take such elaborate care to hide their opinions, or even to give outsiders a false impression as to what their opinions really are. There is really no necessity for either the concealment of Freethought opinions, or for the studiously apologetic manner in which they are so often expressed. What the Christian needs is to be made to feel that his opinions carry no greater title to respect than the opinions of other people. And personal experience taught me long ago that the most effective way of doing this is for Freethinkers to express *their* opinions when occasion demands, and to take their expression as a mere matter of course. Were this done the mere number of Freethinkers would prevent most of those acts of petty persecution that individuals now so often experience. Freethinkers do not, of course, constitute a majority of the population, but they are sufficiently numerous to command respectful treatment, if only their numbers were known.

All that this means is, that Freethinkers should take more pride in their opinions than many seem to take at present. Under the most favorable conditions the task before the Freethought advocate is a difficult one. We have against us the dead weight of custom and tradition. The religious preacher appeals to feelings that are already actively associa-

ted with religion, and uses a phraseology that is perfectly familiar to the ears of his hearers. The Freethinker has to divert these feelings from a religious to a social object, and a deal of his language comes to his religious hearers with nearly the unintelligibility of a foreign tongue. These are the inevitable difficulties of the situation, and they are intensified by the inactivity of those Freethinkers who fail to realise how much depends upon their co-operation, and that the possession of ideas in advance of the crowd carries with it a responsibility of the gravest character. To be free ourselves is but one stage of the process; the enjoyment of that freedom, and its security, can only come in the degree to which we succeed in making others free likewise. A great many of our difficulties are really the result of the inactivity of Freethinkers. It is true that religious leaders are always making the same complaint concerning *their* followers, and it might, therefore, be set down to the credit, or discredit, of human nature. But there is little to be proud of in Freethought if it fails to set before its followers a saner ideal of duty than does religion, or fails to arouse them to a more serviceable activity.

There are quite a number of New Year resolutions that one would be pleased to welcome. Editors of newspapers might resolve—for one year only—to really give their readers the news, instead of selected and bowdlerised portions which they think suitable to their readers. Labor leaders might resolve to leave off coquetting with church and chapel, in the stupid hope of using them to their own ends, and pursue their legitimate work in a more scientific spirit. Our next Minister of Education—the tenure of the present one will not, I think, be a lengthy one—might resolve on following what so many ministers have declared to be the only honest and logical course, and introduce a Bill that would exclude the preacher and his deputy from the floor of the school room. Parsons might resolve to tell their congregations the truth about religion, and congregations might resolve to see that they get it. These are all useful and much needed resolutions. If English society would put them into operation during the forthcoming twelve months, it will make 1912 the most significant year in our history.

C. COHEN.

### New Year's Reflections.

"FREETHOUGHT" is not a word honored with a place in the ordinary dictionary. Even Webster's 1902 edition does not contain it, though it has a supplement of twenty-five thousand new words, phrases, and definitions. "Freethinker," however, is correctly defined as one who, in the sphere of religion, "forms opinions independently of the authority of Revelation, or of the Church"; and, naturally, Freethought is the result of such thinking. The Freethinker bows to facts alone, and to these only as interpreted by the reason. Freethinking is, consequently, scientific thinking, or thinking untrammelled by any intellectual or emotional prepossession. Every scientist is of necessity a Freethinker. For a time he may be greatly hampered by biased judgments and conventional beliefs; but sooner or later his investigations land him in perfect freedom. The theologian, on the contrary, is the bond-servant of tradition. He never makes a discovery, but repeats, parrot-like, what he has read and heard in Bible and church. In the absence of facts he clings to fables, and lacking knowledge he deals in gratuitous assumptions. Until he was an old man Sir Charles Lyell entertained beliefs and interpreted the geological record in their light; but as soon as Darwin's lucid presentation of biological facts convinced him of the truth of evolution, he firmly embraced the facts, re-read the story of the rocks under their guidance, and then made a public recantation of his former beliefs. Sir Charles, like his illustrious friend, Darwin, was a Freethinker in the truest sense of the term; and ever since

geology has been a genuine science. Broadly speaking, Freethought and Science are identical both in aim and in method. What we call Freethought or Secularist parties or organisations merely represent the application of the scientific method to the study of theological questions.

A question often asked is, What good has Freethought done in the world? and as a rule it is asked scornfully, and with the object of confounding those who are challenged to answer it. And yet to answer it is the easiest task imaginable. As a matter of fact, all the real good ever done on this planet has been accomplished through the instrumentality of Freethought. Every improvement in the conditions of society is secular in its nature and brought about by secular means. This is a fundamental truth which cannot be disproved, while the actuality of supernatural intervention is simply a belief the truth of which is insusceptible of demonstration. No sane person can fail to see that the whole machinery of the Church is wholly of this world; and it is absolutely impossible to prove that it is ever rendered effectual by any superhuman effort whatsoever. This is a point of which Freethinkers have hitherto made far too little; but there is no getting away from the fact that it is a crucial one. The active presence of the Holy Ghost in any assembly of believers, as well as his very existence, is a belief founded on nothing that cannot be fully accounted for without it. That parsons and Christian workers generally indulge in a contrary assertion only shows how entirely they are slaves of superstition, and that, being such, they cannot be induced to face the facts. And herein lies the explanation of the statement, more than once made by the present writer, that the Churches do more or less good by reclaiming depraved characters and raising morally lapsed individuals to newness of life. Such so-called miracles are beyond doubt performed by Christian Churches, but they are performed by them in the capacity of social clubs, not as Divine institutions: as exclusively human organisations, not as temples of the Holy Ghost. What we have in the Churches is Secularism sporting a wholly imaginary flag, or sailing under totally illusory colors. The unmasking of the Churches is Freethought's chief mission, and its success in this mission is the primary measure of its serviceableness to humanity.

Now, while in reality the Churches are nothing but social clubs, their supernatural pretensions have precluded them from being of permanent service to society. They have frowned upon and actually resented and resisted the great majority of social reforms. We are told that "we get no repetitions to-day of the Plague of London, or of the Black Death of the mediæval age," and that "cholera, yellow fever, small-pox, and typhus, if not quite extinct, have almost lost their terrors." True; but in the grand work of ridding humanity of such terrible scourges the Churches have taken no part whatever. They regarded disease of every kind as a divine judgment, and the only weapon with which they vainly endeavored to fight it was prayer. In 1849 London was visited by a horrible plague, and in an estimated population of 90,000, 50,000 persons perished. In 1664-65 London had another visitation, when, according to the Bills of Mortality, the number of deaths from the plague was 68,596, in a population of some 460,000. We read of innumerable plagues all over the world, causing enormous mortality. In the fourteenth century that awful cycle of epidemics known as the Black Death occurred, during the continuance of which it is estimated that one-fourth of the population of Europe, or twenty-five millions of persons, died a most cruel death. What did the Churches do in the face of such calamities? Nothing but fall on their knees and pray. What good was thereby effected? None. The praying only aided the spread of the pestilence. It was not until Science stepped in and began to study the natures, causes, and possible cures of the various fierce epidemics that any decrease in their number and violence was noticed; and the comparative immunity from them enjoyed by civilised countries to-day is due alone to the

adoption of scientific methods of prevention as well as to the scientific treatment of any attacks that do take place. Christianity not only has not done anything to hasten the elimination of disease, but for many centuries did its utmost to discourage and suppress the medical science which at last has triumphed and is on the road to complete victory over it. Christianity allowed our forefathers to sleep with their windows tightly closed, with heavy curtains around their beds, and with nightcaps on their heads; but science has banished the bed curtains and nightcaps, and thrown the windows wide open. Ventilation is a science, sanitation is a science, and so is hygiene; and these have sprung into prominence while Christianity has been slowly declining. But it was the growth of Rationalism, the subtle permeation of the public mind by Freethought principles, that made the re-emergence of science possible. This fact is a spring of hope from which Freethinkers may freely quaff the refreshing beverage at the commencement of another year. We of to-day are reaping the harvest sown in suffering and sorrow by the Freethinkers of the past. It is immaterial what fortunes or misfortunes await individual Freethought societies if the principles of Freethought are getting to dominate modern life; and that this is the case is sadly admitted by the leaders of the Churches. The late Dr. Marcus Dods, a most influential United Free Churchman in Scotland, was so impressed by the rapid advance of unbelief that he prophesied very hard times for the parson of the twentieth century. "In fifty years," he said, "the Churches will not know themselves"; and he wondered if "there will be a rag of faith left among them." "J. B." of the *Christian World*, opposes a demurrer to that lugubrious forecast in the following manner:—

"Those who argue from our present difficulties and confusions that religion amongst us is really in danger have forgotten one of the surest conclusions of science. They have forgotten its leading doctrine, that of the indestructibility of force. We know how that holds in the physical sphere. You may change its forms; change motion into heat, or into light, or into electricity, and back again. But you never destroy one atom of it. Do we suppose it is otherwise with spiritual force? That, too, is susceptible of every change of form, of outward expression. But it has an immortal destiny, as it has an immortal source. We have immense changes in prospect. But the good that is already in the world will never be banished from it."

That is a fine piece of sophistication. It is riddled from end to end with fallacies. Fallacy number one is that there is such a thing as spiritual force. Science knows nothing of it. There is no trace of it anywhere. Can "J. B." inform us what it is and how it works? Will he condescend to tell us what two or three of its endless potential forms, or outward expressions, are? However, without affording us the least hint as to its nature and sphere of operation he assures us that "it has an immortal destiny, as it has an immortal source." Leaving us in the dark with those vague yet dogmatic utterances, he springs a surprise upon us by declaring that "the good that is already in the world will never be banished from it." But, surely, our friend must be aware that good in the abstract never did exist except as an idea, while good in the concrete is nothing but a happy relation between two or more individuals. Goodness as a spiritual force eternally existing in the Universe is a pure myth; and to assert that even as a social relation "it has an immortal destiny" is to overstep all "the limits of knowledge." But, in any case, are we to assume that the good already in the world is synonymous with Christianity, which Dr. Dods believed to be dying out? If so, the only conclusion permissible is that "J. B." is guilty of deliberate trifling. We agree with Dr. Dods in the view that ere long every rag of faith will have vanished from the Church. The rags of faith have been taking their departure, one by one, for a good many years now, and the process is still in full swing. According to "J. B.," these rags of faith are but visible forms, or outward expressions,

of a mysterious something called a spiritual force which "has an immortal destiny." Whatever they really are the whole Church has always looked upon them as essentials, or fundamental elements, of the Christian religion; but while they are being successively renounced, even by Christians themselves, goodness as a social relation, on "J. B.'s" own showing, is flourishing more and more. Now, there can be no distinction between goodness and morality, both being but different names of the self-same social relation. Therefore, and again on "J. B.'s" own showing, the Christian religion, in its only historical meaning, is finally shut out. Freethought has already, both logically and ethically, gained the day, and unless we prove recreant to the trust committed to our care by the reason, the time is coming when it shall have done so actually as well.

Recently we have witnessed a slight revival of the old spirit of persecution; but it only represents a reckless attempt on the part of Christianity to reassert a power it has lost for ever. Taking a comprehensive view of the state of Christendom, Freethinkers have very good reasons for cultivating the inspiring grace of hope, and, in this grace, for offering themselves as living sacrifices on the altar of devoted service to the Grand Old Cause; and doing this they may wish one another a glad and not unprosperous new year.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Bohemia for Freethought.

BOHEMIA is the youngest but not the least vigorous child of Freethought. That land, the sacred ground which has been soaked with the blood of martyrs innumerable, headed by the indomitable John Huss and Jerome of Prague, is the generous soil from which the seed of Freethought has recently sprung into a rich harvest of activity. Of the stupendous results, as seen in the well-organised propaganda of Rationalist principles not only in the land of the Czechs, but in the United States, where that vigorous race is so numerously represented, I have often spoken as well in the pages of the *Freethinker* as in those of the *New York Truthseeker*.

A recent case, showing once again how our Czech brethren seem to be outstripping all precedents and all competitors in the field of Freethought, is that just cited by my good friend Hins\* in *La Pensée* (of December 17). In the early days of March, when the Freethought party throughout Europe was forwarding petitions and remonstrances from every land in favor of the revision of the Ferrer trial, the Czech Federation easily headed the list. They sent to the Cortès a big volume containing sheaves of petitions gathered from a large number of localities in Bohemia and Moravia, the whole containing more than 10,000 (ten thousand) signatures of individuals belonging to every class and condition. The fact that all this successful canvassing amidst solid blocks of hostile opinion, and in a country, too, only recently discovered for Freethought, can be organised, shows that the latent forces working for our ideas may be brought to the surface even from the lowest depths of superstition if only the proper appeal be made by men endowed with tact, imagination, and enthusiasm.

These, indeed, are precisely the qualities that Czech Freethought eminently possesses. In an age when the waves of reaction, as Mr. Foote so justly and bitterly complains, seem to be rising throughout Europe, the Bohemian Freethinkers have not only uplifted the flag of Rationalism with hands that have grasped victory against fearful odds, but have borne it from triumph to triumph in the teeth of persecution, confiscation, fines, and imprisonment. For this achievement of courage and skill they deserve the encouragement and praise of Freethinkers in every land.

\* I do not know how we should fare for our knowledge of international Freethought without the vigilant eye and fruitful pen of M. Eugène Hins.

In a recent number of *Le Journal de Charleroi* (an excellent Belgian eight-paged daily, now in its sixty-eighth year of publication, and as full of Freethought as an egg is of meat) M. Hins furnishes certain fresh particulars of Czech Freethought which deserve to be known, to its praise and for our emulation. He reminds us that our Bohemian friends organise a national Congress once every two years. The first, in 1907, was held at Prague, and was the last Freethought Congress at which Ferrer took part. The next was held at Prague in 1909, and now we learn that last year, on October 28 and 29, the Congress, held at Pardubice, was attended by Czech Freethinkers from every part of Austria. On the eve of the Congress a great public meeting devoted to propaganda work was held, at which the following themes were unfolded: (1) The development of society, from the Reformation to Freethought, by Dr. Loskot; (2) The moral effects of Freethought in modern society, by Dr. Bartosek; (3) The history of Freethought in Bohemia, by Myslik; and (4) The propaganda of Freethought, by Novak, the Secretary of the Czech Federation.

At the Congress a report was presented by the Secretary, from which we glean that the work of propaganda in Bohemia occupies the whole time and energies of six special employés. Part of their labors consists in defending the neutrality of the school against the clericals, and especially against the odious attempts of the priests to compel the children of Freethinkers to participate in religious ceremonies and even to force the parents to submit their offspring to the odious humiliation of baptism.

In 1909, 1910, and again last year (1911) the Czech Freethinkers organised imposing manifestations in honor of Ferrer. For daring to honor where honor is due they had to suffer at the hands of the bigots, who, whether you attack them with the rough tongue or the smooth, will always pour their venom upon the wicked unbeliever. In revenge for the 1909 demonstration the clericals obtained the legal dissolution of the Czech Freethought society "*Augustin Smetana*"; their revenge in 1910 was a criminal prosecution of the two principal orators (Bartosek and Boerner). In the result Bartosek was acquitted, but Boerner, belonging to the German section of Freethought in Austria, was condemned to fifteen days' imprisonment for "outraging religion"—a sort of carrying coals to Newcastle, for religion always was outrageous and outraging. The effect of Bartosek's acquittal was that last year the police did not dare again to molest the promoters of the Ferrer demonstration at Prague.

The report goes on to say that when the Deputy-Burgomaster of Vienna attacked Ernesto Nathan, the Freethought Mayor of Rome, because of his indignant protests against the encroachments of the Papal power upon the civil liberties of Italy, the Czech Freethought party, acting in concert with all the other progressive sections in Austria, arranged a great meeting at Prague. At this gathering votes of sympathy were addressed to Signor Nathan and to the anti-Clerical party in Italy, and a proposition was made and passed unanimously in favor of appointing an annual celebration in every land of the 20th of September, being the day when, in 1870, the Italian troops made the epoch-marking breach in the Porta Pia. The proposal, already favorably received in certain countries, has not yet been adopted by the International Federation at Brussels. In the meantime, the Czechs are keeping the idea alive, and on September 20, last year, held another successful demonstration in commemoration of the day when the temporal power of the Popes ceased.

Our readers will remember the prosecution last April of the Czech Executive Committee, consisting of 17 persons, for the crime of having constituted a society contrary to the bigoted prescriptions of the Austrian law. The trial resulted in the infliction of fines varying in amount from 20 to 50 crowns (or francs) for each culprit, the total fines amounting to 410 francs. It is pleasant to read that the Czech Rationalists in America, whose representatives,

headed by Dr. Vojan, we met at Brussels in August, 1910, sent 3,000 crowns in aid of the expenses attending the prosecution, which, so far from ruining the cause, has given a fresh impetus to its activities.

The missionary zeal of the Czech organisers and lecturers knows no bounds. To them it is as nothing to journey from Chicago and New York to Brussels, like Dr. Vojan and his colleagues in 1910, or from Prague to the United States, like my friend Karel Pelant, who lectured (nearly 200 times) for some nine months throughout the American continent in all the cities where the Czech colonists are found, arousing fresh enthusiasm for Freethought by the contagion of his splendid enthusiasm. During the last two years the members of the Executive Committee—Pelant, Myslik, and Dr. Bartosek—have visited the Czech colonies in Germany as missionaries of Freethought. The two latter have also been on tour amongst the Slavs of South Austria, Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, and Servia. It is owing to the overflow—as it were—of Czech enthusiasm that the Croatian Freethought section at Zagreb (Agram) has since been founded. This section has already started a paper, *Slobodna Misao* (Freethought). Instances like these might be multiplied, showing the cumulative effect of the new Czech movement for Freethought.

Besides keeping up a regular communication with the American Czechs (who held their second Congress at Chicago on September 3 & 4, 1911) on the one hand, and on the other working in comradeship (so rarely seen as between Teutons and Czechs) with the German Freethinkers in Bohemia, the Czech Freethought movement has taken active part in the late electoral struggles in Austria, so that no Clerical deputy to Parliament was elected in Bohemia (formerly Bohemia sent seven M.P.'s to Vienna), whilst in Moravia five Clericals only were elected in lieu of the former twelve.

Another sphere of activity opened up by the Czech Freethought Federation has been the launching of a society entitled "*Krematorium*," whose members, 1,146 in number, leave directions by their will enjoining the incineration of their remains after death. At present the Austrian law does not admit of cremation, and the wishes of deceased members have to be carried out over the frontier. In anticipation of an early change in the law (framed, of course, in order to bolster up the ridiculous doctrine of the resurrection of the dead), the society has acquired the necessary ground for the erection of a crematorium. As, by the nature of things, the expenses of cremation in Bohemia must be very considerable, in view not only of the generally enhanced cost attending this wholesome reform, but of the exceptional difficulties under which the rational and clean disposal of the dead labors in Austria, the formation of this successful society may be taken as a pretty clear indication of the relatively high social status enjoyed by the Czech adherents of Freethought. For instance, J. S. Machar, the greatest living Czech poet, is a staunch Freethinker. He warmly adhered to the Prague Congress in 1907, and contributed an article on December 1, 1911, to the organ of Czech Freethought in America.

A word as to the Czech Freethought press. Two monthly reviews are issued: *Volna Myslenka* (Freethought), circulation 5,000; and *Volna Skola* (The Free School), sale 3,000 copies. In addition, there is issued fortnightly a popular publication, *Havlček*, enjoying a circulation of 70,000. A Freethought weekly will be launched in 1912.

Czech Freethought looks far ahead, on the principle that only by preparation for future events can we mould and command them. It has decided to hold its next Congress, which is due in 1913, at Vienna, and, if I am alive and well, I promise myself the pleasure and profit of attending, not only to see one of the gayest and most beautiful cities in Europe, but in order to gladden my eyes with the spectacle of the triumph and enthusiasm of these new and vigorous recruits to the glorious army of Free-

thought. I owe this pilgrimage in order to pay my personal homage to the enlightened zeal of my friend Pelant, whom I met at Rome in 1904 and learnt from him then of his resolve from that time forward to labor unceasingly in his native land to build broad and deep the foundations of Czech popular Freethought. The Vienna Congress will be an important step towards consolidating the union of the Freethought elements amidst the diverse nationalities of Austria. Already Freethought in Bohemia is leading the way in breaking down the barriers of antipathy and isolation between the hostile races which make the Eastern empire such an ill assortment of conglomerate disharmonies. This beneficent work for inter-racial solidarity is not the least important amongst the many contributions made by our Czech friends towards realising that higher ethic of Freethought which will ultimately wean the world away from the dried paps of Christianity.

Beyond the nearer eventualities of 1913, our Czech friends are looking forward—and laboring—for the success of the International Freethought Congress (at Prague) of 1915, when the five hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of John Huss will be commemorated. I have no doubt that the devotion and enthusiasm of our Czech friends will make that celebration a notable event in the annals of Freethought. That they are confident of success is certain, and surely we can say they deserve it, when we know that they ardently invite the Freethinkers throughout the world to send a goodly array of delegates to witness their triumph and share in its rewards.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

### Acid Drops.

We have been favored with what looks like a new edition of Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell*, published by James Duffy and Co., Dublin, with the authority of the Catholic Church, at the price of one penny, for the special edification of "Children and Young Persons." This little volume used to contain horrible pictures of the tortures in hell, but the Catholic Church seems to be ashamed of the pictures nowadays or afraid to print them any longer. We also notice other omissions. One is the statement that "the walls of hell are four thousand miles thick." Many years ago we used to say that four thousand miles was a good thickness, but not as thick as the heads of the fools who believed it.

Father Furniss, with the permission of the Catholic Church, states that hell is crowded with millions and millions of lost souls—joined to their bodies again, of course, according to Church teaching. They all stink. They stink so that "if one single body was taken out of Hell and laid on the earth, in that moment every living creature on the earth would sicken and die." What a stinking doctrine! Only priests are equal to such abominations.

Here is another pretty picture of hell from Father Furniss's studio:—

"You have heard, perhaps, a horrible scream in the dead of night. You may have heard the last shriek of a drowning man, before he went down into his watery grave. You may have been shocked in passing a madhouse, to hear the wild shout of a madman. Your heart may have trembled when you heard the roar of a lion in the desert or the hissing of a deadly serpent in the bushes.

"But listen now—listen to the tremendous, the horrible uproar of millions and millions and millions of tormented creatures mad with the fury of Hell. Oh, the screams of fear, the groanings of horror, the yells of rage, the cries of pain, the shouts of agony, the shrieks of despair from millions on millions. There you hear them roaring like lions, hissing like serpents, howling like dogs, and wailing like dragons. There you hear the gnashing of teeth and the fearful blasphemies of the devils. Above all, you hear the roaring of the thunders of God's anger, which shakes Hell to its foundations."

Talk about blasphemy! What blasphemy could be worse than this? God is depicted as more cruel than the devils themselves—for they only torture the damned by his permission. Yet what magistrate would grant a summons under the Blasphemy Laws against the printers, publishers, and other persons responsible for this infamous publication?

Blasphemy Laws are kept only for Freethinkers. And what is their crime? They declare that "God" can hardly be as black as his representatives paint him.

Considering that the ordinary law is quite capable of dealing with the producers and vendors of really obscene publications, it is advisable to watch closely the clerical gentlemen of all denominations who are putting all the pressure they can upon the Home Secretary to introduce a new law against "immorality." We have a shrewd suspicion that what they actually want is a new law so worded as to make it a weapon of attack upon all sorts of opinions that the Churches are hostile to and that are hostile to the Churches. It is already announced that the contemplated Bill will be directed not only against "indecent" and "obscene" publications, but also against the "grossly offensive"—an elastic phrase which prosecutors, judges, and jurymen can interpret so as to include anything whatever that is not strictly orthodox. This is a new danger to all advanced journalists, and particularly so to journals like our own carrying on a relentless attack upon the Christian superstition. The Bill will also include a right of search, apparently not by warrant, for "objectionable" things, which virtually gives the police power to invade any advanced writer's residence, at any time of the day or night. Even private persons, it seems, will not be free from this sort of invasion. We shall have more to say on this matter presently. Meanwhile, we warn Freethinkers of every variety against what appears to be a most insidious move in the game of reaction.

According to the *Daily Chronicle* a small church in Birmingham put the following notice outside:—"Evening Subject: 'They will be done.'"

Rev. George James Scott, who looked like a tramp, and lived by himself at North Leigh, Oxfordshire, where he had been vicar for twenty-four years, was found dead in his bed of heart failure and asthma. It was supposed that he died penniless, but investigation showed that he possessed many thousands of pounds, besides property which is said to include some public-houses in Soho, London. We wonder if the Rev. G. J. Scott and Jesus Christ have met each other yet and what has passed between them. It is known that the latter uses pretty strong language on appropriate occasions.

The Most Reverend William Alexander, D.D., formerly Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland, who died in retirement at Belton Lodge, Torquay, left £32,964. Poor Jesus! And well-provided Apostle!

Another apostle of the gospel of "Blessed be ye poor"! Rev. Cecil Henry, of Thorpe Malson Hall, Kettering, left £118,713 11s. 2d. We dare say he often read the parable of Dives and Lazarus as well as the Sermon on the Mount. But the text "And in hell he lifted up his eyes" appears to have caused the reverend gentleman no disquiet.

Christmas Day's issue of the *Morning Leader* contained a long article on "Working Women's Expenditure." Mention was made of a coatmaker who earned an average of 15s. 4d. per week, of which she paid away 9s. 0½d. for board and lodging. A boat trip costing 2s. 3d. was the only holiday she had during the year. "Presents and collections," however, consumed £1 3s. 2d., "much the biggest share of which went to the Church." Less than one half-crown for herself and (say) six or seven half-crowns for the pious parasites! Such is the power of religion over the humble poor. It is enough to provoke "language." But no dictionary contains the words most appropriate to the occasion.

The Preface to the new (second) edition of Mr. J. M. Robertson's important book, *Pagan Christs*, contains a statement which we read with regret though not with surprise. Mr. Robertson refers to several criticisms of various portions of his book and says:—

"It is to be regretted that it should still be necessary to make replies to criticisms in these matters consist largely of exposures of gross misrepresentation, blundering, bad faith, and bad feeling, as well as bad reasoning, on the part of theological critics. In the case of a hostile critique in the *Hibbert Journal*, which did not incur these characterisations, I made an amicable appeal for space in which to reply and set forth my own case; but my request was refused."

If such is the intellectual hospitality and sense of fair play of the conductors of the *Hibbert Journal*, what can be expected of ordinary religious publications? No wonder they are beneath contempt in such matters. The fact is, as we have always said, that no Christians—not even the best

of the tribe—are to be trusted in relation to Freethinkers. They may be good husbands, good fathers, good sons, good brothers, good friends, and good citizens, but in regard to Freethinkers they are nearly all disgracefully false and disgustingly mean.

During the past year the Congregationalists have "formed" 14 new churches and built 20 new chapels. On the other hand, there has been a decrease in membership of 640—the smallest decrease for some years. More shops opened, but fewer customers! Looks like an example of the law of diminishing returns. There has also been a decrease of over 10,000 Sunday-school scholars. This is a feature of vital significance. It shows that the supply of new Christians is running dry. And backward as the world is, it is yet too advanced to supply a very large contingent of believers from its adult population.

The *Christian World* concludes, from the report of the headmasters' conference to which we referred in last week's "Acid Drops," that it is not safe to leave the teaching of the Bible to parents of the upper classes any more than to the parents of the lower classes. They are equally careless about it. We believe this to be truth, and it at once disposes of the empty talk about the desire of the people to have the Bible in the schools. The parents do not desire it, the children cannot desire it, and the teachers—taken them as a whole—do not want it. It is a parsons' question throughout. They are the only ones who desire it in the schools, and they want it there because it is their book. It is the book of their profession; and if children can be brought up to attach an exaggerated value to it, they are likely to set a fancy value on them. A further conclusion of the *Christian World* is that, as the parents are not concerned about the Bible, it may safely be left in the hands of the teacher. The reasoning is not very cogent. It seems much more rational to say that, as the clergy are the only parties who are really anxious to teach the Bible, they should do the teaching in their own places and in their own time. The school would then be left free for its legitimate work of training body and mind. The teacher would be relieved of a generally unwelcome task, and the nation delivered from a sectarian wrangle that, more than anything else, has obstructed the improvement of our educational machinery.

The *Methodist Times* thinks that Dr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* needs "to be carefully adjusted to orthodox beliefs, very much in the same way as the *Origin of Species* has been adjusted." Ye gods! Those who have gone through the controversy over the *Origin of Species*, and have noted the endless trickery of interpretation, the theories propounded one season and swallowed the next, and all to "harmonise" Darwinism and Christianity, will open their eyes—and mouths—at such a deliverance. The *Methodist Times* also says that, "taken as it stands, Frazer's work, like Darwin's, does not lend itself to the confirmation of the faith." We should say not; and so Christian apologists are invited, as they cannot obliterate the facts nor seriously disturb the conclusions based upon the facts, to set to work and "adjust" the *Golden Bough* to the Methodist faith. Verily, Christianity is always the same. It learns nothing and it forgets nothing.

Herne Bay bigots have had another set back. Perhaps, instead of bigots, we ought to say the professional mystery men. They tried hard to get the Sunday band on the pier stopped altogether. Then they tried to stop it from starting at 7 p.m. Eight o'clock was so much better for them, as the church and chapel performances were over by that time and were not affected by a dangerous competition. But that effort was defeated, and a similar fate awaited their recent effort in the same direction.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has issued a pious New Year's message to all and sundry who care to listen to him, including, of course, the members of the Church of England, over which he presides in the name of "poor Jesus Christ" at a salary of £15,000 a year. We have read "Cantuar's" message, and we don't think we ever encountered more contemptible drivel. There is a lot in it about the "unrest" of the age. Evidently the Archbishop deplores it; indeed, he can hardly understand it, for there is no unrest attached to his job. But the unrest exists. He sees that by the newspapers. But a remedy also exists. And what is it? *Prayer*. That is the cure-all. It is just on all-fours with Becham's Pills "worth a guinea a box," or Carter's Pills that "cure all human ills." And the comparison is really in favor of the pills. A box of pills is of very little intrinsic value, but it costs something, while prayer is nothing and costs nothing. The money spent upon it is for the sole benefit of the praying-machines.

"I am seventy-three," says Father Stanton, "and I want to be allowed quietly to slow down into the terminus." But why *terminus*? We thought Father Stanton, like other Christians, regarded it as a *junction*. "Change here for ——" Where? "Ay, there's the rub."

Matthew Arnold once referred to "the Mississippi of falsehood called history." We were reminded of this in turning to the article "Bradlaugh" in Cassell's *Biographical Dictionary*. Fair space, comparatively, is given to that great reformer, but the central fact of his life—namely, his Atheism—is not mentioned. He is merely called "an antagonist of the Christian religion." On the other hand, there are two serious false statements—which is a good deal in the course of thirty lines. Bradlaugh's efforts in favor of affirmation in 1870 are spoken of favorably, and it is said that "the expenses of the trial made him bankrupt." This is not true. Bradlaugh's enemies tried all they knew some ten or eleven years after, during the great parliamentary struggle, to make him bankrupt, but they never succeeded. He kept out of the bankruptcy court, as he kept out of prison, in spite of them. Nor is it true that Bradlaugh, returned for Northampton to Parliament in 1880, "refused to take the oath, and was not allowed to take his seat until after the general election of 1885." Christians invented that falsehood at the time, and it lives now, like other pious lies, as a tradition. Bradlaugh never refused to take the oath. He always made that clear enough to people who wanted to see. As an absolute matter of fact, too, Bradlaugh sat and voted in 1880, by consent of the House of Commons, but at his own risk; and it was on account of his voting under those conditions that Newdegate started the famous action for penalties.

The *Liverpool Express* is very indignant at the latest Papal decree threatening excommunication against Catholics who bring the clergy before tribunals of lay judges. But as this excommunication is purely spiritual and only applies to members of the Catholic Church, there is no danger in it to Protestants—who profess to laugh at the Pope's fulminations. Why, then, does the *Express* ask what the British Government is going to do? Moreover, we beg to point out that this is quite in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament. Paul, for instance, distinctly tells the Christians not to go to law with each other before any tribunal but that of the "saints." See 1 Corinthians, vi. 1-6.

"The pretensions of Rome," the *Liverpool Express* says, "are becoming steadily and relentlessly more aggressive, and a resolute attitude must be adopted towards this latest enactment." But how are you going to prevent a Catholic's voluntary obedience to his own Church? If he doesn't choose to bring an action at law against a priest how are you going to make him? Certainly the Catholic Church is "aggressive" and Freethinkers have their eye upon it. But have the Protestant Churches lost their "cheek"? Don't they take the money of all religionists, and non-religionists, to teach their own religious doctrines in the national elementary schools? Don't they maintain laws to punish with imprisonment as "blasphemous" men who criticise those doctrines too freely? What is the difference between Catholic insolence and Protestant impudence? Nothing, except a question of more or less, according to opportunity.

Two men of God, at least, came to grief during Christmas-tide. One of them had his head blown to bits by an explosion at a children's entertainment, in which his zeal to amuse was not according to knowledge. The other, a Catholic priest, at a similar entertainment, had the wisdom to wear a cotton wool beard, which became ignited, and his face and hands were terribly burnt. The former man of God went to glory. We hope the latter will recover and keep out of it.

Life's dangers are the same for clergymen as for laymen. "One thing befalleth them; yea they have all one breath." The Board of Education has just issued a volume of nearly six hundred pages on the perils of cramming for examinations. One of the victims to this peril is the Rev. Harry Yewdale Waite, aged twenty-seven, master of King Alfred's School, Wantage, who committed suicide by jumping out of a bedroom window at his father's house at Havering, Cumberland, during the Christmas holidays. He is reported to have been "suffering from the effects of overstudy."

"Providence" saw nicely to the weather at Christmas. Gales in the Channel and wrecks everywhere. "So gracious and so hallowed" is the time.

Seth Fisher, who has been a verger at a local church for four years, has just been fined £3 and costs at Brentwood for a brutal and apparently unprovoked assault on Charles Fear, aged 78, and his wife, aged 76, besides throwing a policeman over the front garden railings. Rev. A. Compton, parson of the church referred to, said that the prisoner had probably had an extra Christmas glass. This is not much of a compliment to Christmas.

Some people sadly want a sense of humor. At a recent Christian Brotherhood meeting at Cardiff the Chairman told of "a wonderful illustration of the power and value of Jesus Christ." A man was on a railway station staggering under the influence of drink, and eventually he fell upon the platform. The speaker and others ran forward to pick him up. When he was on his feet again two words escaped his lips—"Jesus Christ." Even that poor drunken man, the speaker said, knew and "audibly recognised that the only power that could keep him erect and safe in this wicked world was the power and personality expressed by those two sacred words." This overlooks the fact that Jesus Christ let the man drop; it was others who picked him up.

There was a crowded house at a cinematograph show on Christmas Eve, at an "on sea" place not far from London. All went well until "The First Christmas" (the story of little Jesus) was turned on. That caused a stampede. The audience didn't want any boys but cowboys. Yet this is a Christian country.

Canon Inge—the "Gloomy Dean," as the Christian papers have called him, because he had the courage to face one or two rather obvious facts—was pointing out the other day that friendship played a greater part in ancient times than it has done during the Christian period. Being a dignitary, he had to find a reason for this that was complimentary to Christianity. It was due, he said, to the fact that in Christian countries a man's best friend is his wife, and a woman's best friend her husband. We are afraid the Dean's explanation hardly fits the facts. Greek and Roman literature and life provide us with at least as fine pictures of comradeship between husband and wife as are to be found in the truly Christian ages. The true line of explanation would rather seem to be the fact that all the purely human relationships were, as human relationships, belittled by Christian teaching. Aristotle could say, "Without friends no man would care to live," because he looked at the world from a human standpoint. The Christian teacher would have been more likely to argue that to value friends was to run the danger of exalting man over God. Of course, Christianity could not crush friendship as a fact, any more than it could crush any other institution that rested on a basis of human needs. But none such owe anything to Christianity for their preservation.

Mrs. Kathleen Henry Johnson, wife of the Rev. Hugh Noel Johnson, has been granted a decree nisi in the Divorce Court. The clerical Lothario asked his wife to tell the children he was dead. He evidently judged her too much by himself.

That unspeakable simpleton, the Bishop of London, who told the story not long ago of a little girl who saw angels walking up and down stairs with him, is paying a visit to Khartoum, where the Christians started building a Cathedral when Kitchener's back was turned. Dr. Ingram is to consecrate it. He will take a large supply of the Holy Spirit with him and leave the requisite quantity behind in the Cathedral. On his way home Dr. Ingram will call at Jerusalem. No doubt, as angels walk with him in London, he will be accompanied by Jesus in the Holy City. And what a tale he will have to tell when he is home again!

The Chicago *Advance* has a typically American, and we think accurate, summary of Mr. R. J. Campbell as a teacher and thinker. Describing his method, the *Advance* says: "Words beat against the air, like the screw of a steamer when lifted up by the waves, and he seems to be taking his hearers nowhere, except away from somewhere." The description is certainly neat, and, we think, correct.

The terribly wounded figure of a bearded naked man who staggered into the cottage of Mrs. Roberts, Plymouth-road, Liscard, appears to have been an ex-soldier on tramp. He had cut his throat and in spite of all care at the nearest hospital he died the next morning. His nudity is explained by his having burnt his clothes, with the aid of paraffin, in a field. Out of reach of the fire, tied in a handkerchief, were a Roman Catholic rosary and a string of amulets with a crucifix and a manual of devotions called the *Order of the Soul*. What a fuss would have been made if the articles in

the handkerchief had been Paine's *Age of Reason* and a copy of the *Freethinker*!

We hope "Providence" is duly grateful. Mr. Lloyd George has just given it a moral certificate. The misery of the world, he said, was not the fault of that personage, for enough food was produced for all if it were only divided up fairly. Mr. George should not have stopped there. Another question arises: Who made the men that divide the food up unfairly, so that some perish of gluttony and others of starvation? "Providence" is either nothing or is responsible for the arrangements all round.

"Newark has chosen for itself an heraldic motto. When Newark was besieged by the Parliamentarians in 1646, the mayor urged the commandant to 'trust God and sally.' This memorable phrase has been selected for the town's motto. It is, perhaps, necessary to utter the hope that the municipal printers will never make the mistake of printing sally with a capital S. We should want to know a great deal more about Sally before we were prepared to trust her."—*Sunday Times*.

After turning the *Freethinker* out of the Free Libraries the Christian bigots on the Camberwell Borough Council have been trying to thrust religion into the Council's meetings. We take the following report from the *Daily Chronicle* of December 22:—

"SHOULD COUNCILS OPEN WITH PRAYER?"

"FREETHINKER URGES FAIRPLAY FOR A CLERGYMAN."

"A proposal that the meetings of the Council should be opened with the Lord's Prayer led to a lively scene at Wednesday night's meeting of the Camberwell Borough Council.

"The proposal was made by Councillor the Rev. H. E. Jennings, of St. Clement's, East Dulwich. While he was speaking several members left the chamber, and Councillor Ball protested that some of them had gone round inducing others to join them, so that there should not be a quorum.

"Mr. Jennings said the question was not a party one, and he spoke not as a clergyman, but as a man. 'The reason why I make this suggestion,' he continued, 'is because I think all of us are agreed, even Councillor Moss, that there is not only this life to consider.'

"Councillor Moss (a Freethinker) replied indignantly, 'I said that? I beg to say I have never said anything of the sort.'

"Mr. Jennings: Oh, I thought you did.

"Mr. Moss: Have we a quorum? I protest against the attempt that has been made to burke discussion. The reverend gentleman has a perfect right to put his motion, and I, as a Freethinker, will defend his right to argue the question. I think it is perfectly cowardly on the part of people who profess to be Christians to sneak away and leave the clergyman in the lurch. I am prepared to oppose this suggestion, and discuss the question solemnly, seriously, and scientifically, and I object strongly to anybody treating the reverend gentleman with this disrespect. They call themselves Christians, too!

"The Mayor was asked to count the members present, and the division bell was rung, but many Councillors remained outside the door, some smoking and talking, and others preparing to leave. None returned to the Council Chamber, and his worship announced that there was not a quorum, and adjourned the meeting."

Councillor Moss has always been a good example to his fellow members on the Camberwell Borough Council.

What a pity it is that the clergy are so often ignorant of the Bible. Rev. Daniel H. C. Bartlett, of St. Nathaniel's Church, Liverpool, in a New Year's letter to his parishioners, deploras the poverty and luxury of the present day, but declares that "The atheistical agitator who attributes them to God or Christianity is a liar." According to the Bible, however, it is not the "atheistical agitator" who is the "liar" in this case. Look at Isaiah xlv. 7: "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." We cannot compliment Mr. Bartlett on being "a Daniel come to judgment."

Mr. C. B. Howdill entertained a P. S. A. meeting at Leeds on Sunday with what the *Mercury* calls "an interesting address" on "Blasphemy." In the course of it he said that the editor of the *Freethinker*, in 1883, was "found guilty of scurrilous, offensive, and even indecent caricatures of Christian doctrine." Mr. Howdill *lies*. The word "indecent" was not in our indictment, neither was it suggested by Sir Hardinge Giffard, the prosecuting counsel—now Lord Halsbury. It was invented by the dirty Howdills outside. Lord Chief Justice Coleridge helped us to clear it away. "Mr. Foote," he said, "may be blasphemous, but he certainly is not licentious, and you do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind." But the dirty Howdills are stronger than the truth. In a Christian country we mean—in a Christian country.



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

Orders for literature, of whatever kind, should be sent direct to our new Shop Manager (Mr. H. Sall) at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.—and to no one else.

Subscriptions to the "Freethinker" should also be sent to the same—and to no one else.

The proper address for such orders and subscriptions is as follows:—The Shop Manager, Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Subscriptions for Funds that may be open in the "Freethinker" should be sent to Mr. G. W. Foote at the same address.

Complaints of any kind should also be sent direct to Mr. Foote.

## Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, January 7, Shoreditch Town Hall; at 7.30, "The Curse of Creeds."

January 9, London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner; 14, Shoreditch Town Hall; 21, Glasgow.

February 4 and 11, Queen's Hall; 18, Manchester; 25, Birmingham.

March 3, Liverpool; 10 and 17, Queen's Hall; 24, Leicester.

April 14, Glasgow.

## To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 7, Edinburgh; 14, Liverpool; 21, Shoreditch Town Hall; 28, Battersea. February 11, Glasgow; 25, Queen's Hall. March 31, Queen's Hall.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1911.—Previously acknowledged £332 14s. 2d. Received since:—Joseph Bevins, 10s.; Geo. Lunn, 10s.; J. W. O'Leary, 2s. 6d.

A. W. COLEMAN.—We had written on the subject before receiving your communication, as you will have seen; but thanks all the same.

F. W. S.—See paragraph. Thanks.

W. M. writes: "I have been a reader of the *Freethinker* for the last few months, and intend to continue taking it for the excellent well-studied articles it contains, and because it provides a pleasant antidote for much of what I see and hear." This correspondent is also referred to "Acid Drops."

J. KING.—"The 'solemn sham' was not Christianity. Addison was a Christian himself; indeed, he wrote a little book on Christian Evidences. When he was upon his deathbed he sent for his son-in-law, the young Earl of Warwick, to see how a Christian could die. A wag suggested that he sent for a pint of brandy, at the same time, to do the dying with. For the great Mr. Addison was not a teetotaler."

F. HERMANN.—See paragraph. Thanks.

Geo. LUNN, subscribing to the President's Fund, says: "I wish to say how glad I am that the Fund keeps well alive."

J. CHICK.—Next week. Thanks.

W. J. M.—See paragraph. Thanks.

WM. REED.—Thanks for good wishes. We don't want to "live for ever," neither do we wish to die while we are of any use to others.

JOSEPH BATES.—Certainly an application might be made to the N. S. S. Benevolent Fund in the case you bring to our notice. Write direct to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

J. W. O'LEARY sends "best wishes for 1912 to the most militant Freethinker of the time."

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings, etc.

J. PARTRIDGE, the Birmingham Branch secretary, has removed to 245 Shenstone-road, Bolton-park.

KAY MUIR, newsagent, 43 Button-lane, supplies the *Freethinker* and other advanced literature, and would be glad to get into touch with the local "saints."

W. HEAFORD.—Your New Year's good wishes are cordially reciprocated.

W. AND K. PALMER.—Thanks.

J. GALVIN.—Glad you are now, as an Atheist, both "free and happy." We cannot inform you of any book on "the origin of matter." As far as the origin and development of the earth is concerned, see Sir Robert Ball's works.

A. B. MOSS.—You have our best wishes for the New Year—and after.

J. M. LEWIS.—The statement by Major John Samuel in the *Kent Messenger* is absurd. The late Mr. Reader Harris, K.C., never was "one of Bradlaugh's great supporters." It was only a fact in his pious imagination. Our own memory went back over all the time he indicated and we never heard of him. We often invited him to name any Freethinker who ever knew him as a Freethinker, and he was always too discreet to reply.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

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.

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.

The Shoreditch Town Hall course of lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society (Ltd.), opens this evening (Jan 7). Mr. Foote is the lecturer and his subject is "The Curse of Creeds." The hall is a very large one and there is no charge for admission. Freethinkers in North and East London should try, therefore, to bring some of their more orthodox friends along with them. A little missionary work of this kind is easy and inexpensive. We invite the local "saints" to do it.

This is our last opportunity of announcing the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, which takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening next (Jan. 9) at 7 p.m. It is hoped that diners will be ready for their seats at the tables at that hour. There is a big program to get through and as much time as possible will be wanted before eleven o'clock, when the company begins to break up, as some have to catch last trains for distant parts of Greater London. A good dinner is a certainty at the Holborn; it will be followed by vocal and instrumental music, and brief speeches to toasts by Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, Moss, Heaford, and Davies—and Miss Kough; while Mr. Foote is responsible for a somewhat longer speech rather too grandly called the "Chairman's Address." The all-inclusive tickets are 4s. each, and evening dress is optional. We hope to see a very fine gathering at this function. The Annual Dinner has come to be regarded not only as an enjoyable meeting of the "saints," but also as a kind of demonstration. For that reason those who may hesitate about attending on grounds of convenience should strain a point in favor of the Dinner.

A correspondent asks if ladies may join the dinner party at the Holborn. Certainly. The more the better. A good many ladies have been present hitherto, but we should like to see the number increased. Ours is not a movement that leaves the ladies out. Very far from it.

We have had reasons for publishing no new books or pamphlets lately, but a considerable number will be issued from our office in the near future. Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will?* is the first. This is issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.; that is to say, the investment is made by that Society, to which the property belongs. Several publications by Mr. Foote will follow promptly, including the new editions of *Bible and Beer* and *Bible Heroes*. Mr. Foote is also making two or three collections of the longer and more important articles he has contributed to the *Freethinker* since the publication of *Flowers of Freethought*. Other enterprises will be announced in due course.

Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will*, of which a full advertisement appears on the fourteenth page of this week's *Freethinker*, is now on sale at our publishing office. It is well printed on good paper and tastefully got up in every way. A review of it is being written for our columns by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, and will probably appear in our next issue. Meanwhile we beg to say, for our own part, that Mr. Cohen's book gives us at last a really adequate statement of the Determinist philosophy, with a really adequate reply to the sophisms of Free Will. For this reason it should have a wide circulation. Every Freethinker should possess a copy.

The price is only one shilling net with two pence extra for postage if ordered in that way.

The Metropolitan Radical Federation, at its 320th Council Meeting, held at the Newington Reform Club, Hampton-street, Walworth-road, S.E., on Saturday afternoon, Dec. 23, considered the following notice of motion on its Agenda:—

"That in the opinion of this Federation the time has arrived, and is most opportune, when the Government should take the necessary steps to repeal the pernicious 'Blasphemy Law,' enacted in the reign of William the Third, and which, as it stands, is an insult to a free and liberty-loving people, who have a perfect right to hold conscientious views and publicly express them."

The resolution might have been improved in its framing, for the repeal of the Statute of William III., would still leave the Common Law standing—under which all "blasphemy" prosecutions have occurred, including the very latest. But the intention of the mover (Mr. W. Davey, of the Mildmay Radical Club) is unmistakable. Mr. W. J. Ramsey, who seconded the resolution, spoke with feeling and effect as an ex-prisoner for blasphemy. Mr. A. B. Moss supported the resolution in a speech which the chairman described as "lucid and powerful." The resolution was carried unanimously and ordered to be forwarded to the Home Secretary. A vote of thanks to Mr. A. B. Moss for attending as a representative of the N. S. S. was also carried unanimously.

Mr. Lloyd lectures at Edinburgh this evening (Jan. 7) for the Rationalist and Ethical Guild. We lack further particulars.

The Birmingham Branch opens the second part of its winter program at the King's Hall, Corporation-street, this evening (Jan. 7) with a lecture by Mr. F. E. Willis on "Can We Follow Jesus?"

The *Ringling World* publishes an article, with portrait, of Mr. Henry Burstow—"Horsham's celebrated bellringer and song-singer," who is now eighty-five years of age, and is universally respected. Our contemporary is bold enough to print that Mr. Burstow "is a truth and peace loving Humanitarian" and "an honest and bold Freethinker."

Mr. Heaford's article on the "Escuela Moderna at Valencia" in our issue of November 5 has been translated into Spanish and reproduced, with due acknowledgment, in the educational review *Francisco Ferrer* at Buenos Aires, dated December 1. We are referred to as "la importante revista *the Freethinker*."

This week's acknowledgments include all the subscriptions to the President's Honorarium Fund received up to, and including, December 31. The matter will be dealt with in our next issue with respect to 1912, and the annual appeal will also be published at the same time.

A Scotch (no, a Scottish) correspondent rebukes us for writing England instead of Britain or Great Britain. We hope to disarm his wrath by pleading guilty. But this sort of thing, after all, isn't settled by abstract logic. Convenience, euphony, and all sorts of influences decide the verbal struggle for existence. How about "the English language"? For all practical purposes it is, and was, the language of South Scotland as well as of England. Our personal feelings are not in the least involved. We have none of the patriotism which makes a man consider his own country a great one because he was born in it.

The National Secular Society has not been idle with regard to the Leeds "blasphemy" case. The President has been in active correspondence with various persons, and the Secretary has been engaged in preparations for an important public meeting in London. A petition is also being arranged for presentation to the Home Secretary. Unfortunately the Christmas holidays have been a great hindrance, at least in the matter of time; the delay is regrettable but inevitable.

We are just able to say, as we are going to press, that this meeting is definitely fixed to take place at South Place Institute on Monday evening, January 15, at 8 p.m. Admission to all seats, of course, will be free, with a collection in aid of expenses. The speakers already secured are Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, Mr. F. J. Gould, Mr. Harry Snell, Mr. G. W. Foote, and Mr. C. Cohen. It is hoped that other speakers will be secured in time for announcement in our next issue. We beg our readers to do their best to give the meeting publicity in whatever ways are open to them.

## A Day with Ingersoll.

[I was in America in October, November, and December, 1896. With the late Charles Watts I represented English Freethought, by delegation from the National Secular Society, at the American Secular Congress at Chicago. In the course of our travels we spent nearly three weeks in New York and naturally saw something of the Ingersolls, whose town house was closed while they were spending the "Indian summer" some thirty miles away on a hillside overlooking the noble Hudson River. They returned to their town house before we left for England, and the last interview with Ingersoll took place there. There are other references to him in the Letters which I sent home for the *Freethinker*, but I think these will do for the present. They make together "A Day with Ingersoll," which is not marred, I trust, by the inclusion of the farewell. The function at the Marlborough Hotel referred to was a farewell dinner to the English delegates. The reference to seeing Ingersoll again is pathetic now. I never saw him again. He was coming over to England a few years after, but death took him beforehand. But I hold him clearly and firmly in my mind's eye still, and shall do to the end. I may add that I have often been asked to reprint my Letters from America. I am not contemplating such a step, but I thought that this "Day with Ingersoll" would prove interesting to new readers of the *Freethinker* without being disagreeable to old ones. Finally, I beg pardon of the living Ingersoll family if personal references made so long ago should appear too personal to-day.—G. W. FOOTE.]

A TELEGRAM awaited us at our hotel. It was from Colonel Ingersoll, saying he would call the next morning at ten. That was a thing to go to bed and dream of. At ten o'clock on Friday morning the Colonel came up to our room. His card had been sent up, and while he was coming I felt that this was the most interesting feature of my visit. What were all the great hotels and the big houses of business; what was Central Park, or even the Hudson river, to the fine personality I was about to meet? There was something in Shakespeare to make mountains look little, and there is something in Ingersoll to make the busy streets of New York look trivial. He entered our room, and, after shaking hands, took a chair. He was sorry he could not stop, as he had a case in court; but we were to be sure to come out and visit him at Dobbs' Ferry, up the Hudson. This we arranged to do on the morrow. "Don't come back here," he said, "stop all night, and we'll go to Chickering Hall together." He was only with us a few minutes, and I have to catch the post this afternoon. More of Ingersoll hereafter. For the present, let it suffice that Ingersoll the man realises all my expectations. His personality is commensurate with his genius. If I never saw him again, I should be perfectly satisfied of that. One may study a great picture, and admire its details; but if one is fit to understand it, the first glance is enough to disclose its value.

Saturday morning opened brightly, as we hoped it would, for we were going to spend the day with Ingersoll. Mr. Watts, Mr. Putnam, and I took train to Dobbs' Ferry, up the Hudson, where the Colonel and his son-in-law, Mr. Brown, have a summer residence. Ingersoll cannot bear to be parted from his children, and now two delightful grandchildren draw the family ties still closer. It is an ideal state of things, and reminds me of one advantage which the peasant often has over the more roving artisan. In the country you sometimes see three, or even four, generations under the same roof. The continuity of human life is there a visible reality. The gravity of age is balanced by the gaiety of youth; wise counsel is brought to the aid of vigorous performance; a vital discipline of humanity operates with the unobtrusiveness and omnipresence of light; childhood is naturally reminded of mortality, and world-weary hearts, moving toward their graves, are soothed by the prattle of innocence.

Colonel Ingersoll met us at the station with his carriage, and drove us to our destination. All four of us chatted merrily. Watts and Putnam wore silk hats—stove-pipes the Yankees call them. Ingersoll noticed this, and, pointing to his own soft felt, said: "I am too fond of comfort." I don't know that he is too fond of it, but he certainly acts on the notion

that if you have to go to hell you ought to be as happy as possible till you get there. I wish I had a verbatim report of all that was said in that carriage. Ingersoll's humor is irresistible, and is set off by profound wisdom. Speaking of poetical objects, he remarked that things became poetical when they were associated with our childhood and the most intimate experiences of our lives. "You can't," he said, "get as much poetry out of a well as out of a spring, nor as much poetry out of a pump as out of a well, nor as much poetry out of water-works as out of a pump." The climax was quite unexpected, and he brought it out with a delicious drollery. England, little England, was mentioned. "Well," he said, "it's wonderful what great men you've produced in that little island. If you had nothing else, you've got the greatest literature in the world. All the rest of the world's literature is small beside it. Shakespeare alone outweighs all the rest the world can bring." We spoke of the Bible as literature and I said it was greatly overvalued. "Yes," said Ingersoll, "it is woven with our history, and with most of our associations. But when you look at it freely it doesn't stand the test. There's no poetry at all in the Pentateuch; not an oasis in the desert. There's none in Kings and Chronicles. You get some in Job, in a few of the Psalms, and in the Canticles. Ecclesiastes is the best book of the lot. As for Jeremiah and that sort of thing, why I could write like that by the mile. Some of the writing in the Bible," Ingersoll continued, "is positively stupid. 'And he lifted up his eyes, and lo and behold.'" This was uttered inimitably. A Presbyterian elder could not have helped laughing.

As we drove through the grounds to the house, Ingersoll drew our attention to some of his favorite trees and lovely bits of autumn coloring. When we got in front of the house we found the whole Ingersoll family, excepting the grandchildren, out to meet us. They did not wait formally inside. Their hospitality was more generous. Mrs. Ingersoll was there, with her married daughter Eva, and Mr. Brown. The handshaking, smiles, laughter, and pleasant words were enough to melt the misanthropy of a Timon. In less than a minute we were all quite at home with each other. Mrs. Ingersoll seems intended by nature as the Colonel's partner. She evidently idolizes her husband, whose affection for her is just as obvious. But she is not a foolish worshiper. Her intelligence matches her rare geniality, and she is a fine conversationalist. And when bright sense comes from the mouth of a woman whose face is a picture of goodness, with an underlying charm of personal beauty, one has to confess the weakness of words to express the gracious combination. But if words are weak to convey an impression of Mrs. Ingersoll, they are still weaker to convey an idea of Mrs. Brown. She seems to have caught the charm of both parents. She is young, she is very beautiful, she is accomplished, she is modest. Every virtue shines in her countenance. Her movements, her gestures, her speech are angelic. I would I had the pen of a Burke to describe that delightful vision. Shelley would have made her the theme of a finer poem than the one addressed to Jane Williams. Shakespeare would have remembered her for a place in his immortal gallery of women. I wondered how Mr. Brown had so propitiated Fortune as to secure such a prize in life's lottery. It is not altogether explained by the fact that he is a very agreeable gentleman, with a good head, and unassuming manners. I don't suggest that he is unworthy of her. The longer I was in his company the more I liked him and respected his intelligence, and I fancy I should like and respect him still more on closer acquaintance. Still, I should like to get Fortune into a quiet corner and ask her that question.

Later on we saw the two grandchildren, a boy and a girl, nearly the age of my own two youngest little ones. Mrs. Brown is justly proud of them, though of course she didn't say so; but looks are more eloquent than words. The Colonel is evidently over head and ears in love with both of them, and I reckon they know it.

Miss Maud Ingersoll was engaged in New York, and I only saw her for a moment on the following Sunday evening. Had she been present the family circle would have been complete. But I saw enough to satisfy me that I was in a perfect home. This "infidel" family, shut out from all that religion declares to be necessary to the higher life, was a model for the world. There was culture and refinement with perfect homeliness, and love was lord of all. Looking out of the windows one saw a glorious prospect across the Hudson. Nature there was at her finest, and human nature was here at its best.

We spent the whole day with the Ingersolls, and they wanted us to stay all night, so that we might all go to Chickering Hall together the next evening. It was very pleasant to know they would like to see more of us, but we had arranged to return to our hotel. After lunch we went into the billiard-room, where I played the Colonel an American pool game—of course, for love—and initiated him into English billiards. Mr. Brown also played me a game and we had a fine time. Ingersoll is an all-round man. He was just as delightful in the billiard-room as anywhere else. Afterwards the Colonel played a game of euchre with Mr. Watts, Mr. Putnam, and Mr. Brown.

We were all in good spirits at the dinner-table. Ingersoll himself was in splendid form. It is a weakness of mine to dislike oysters. "So you don't like oysters, Foote," he said. "It's the only fault I find in you." Which was a very dexterous compliment, prompted by a very generous feeling. I was made to tell about my imprisonment, and when I said that Gladstone was Prime Minister at the time, Ingersoll wondered on what principle he was so hot against the Turks for persecuting the Armenians. Ingersoll told the story of his pleading for a man accused of murder. The man had a wife and three children, and Ingersoll pictured to the jury the poor woman at the gate with one child in her arms and the other two at her side, waiting for her husband. Everybody was crying, the judge was crying, and "I was crying myself," said Ingersoll. The question for the jury was, Would they send that man home to the poor woman waiting at the gate? and the foreman of the jury, in a most determined manner, said, "We will." The man was acquitted. He got a portrait of Ingersoll, and portraits of the twelve jurymen; these he hung up in his room, and called them Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles.

To me it was a golden day, a day of days. I had seen Ingersoll in his home, and found him as great there as outside it. He is no pury ascetic, nor is there an atom of false pride in his composition. He hates solemnity. He is always natural. The charm of his writing and oratory is the charm of the man. I never expect to meet a nobler personality. I do not believe a nobler exists on this planet.

Colonel Ingersoll was of course not present at this farewell dinner. He had been confined to his room for weeks, the doctors having ordered him complete rest, even to the absolute exclusion of visitors. They said he had been working too hard, that complete rest for a good while would set him all right again, but that he would have to take things easier in future, and certainly refrain from travelling day after day and lecturing night after night. We called on the Ingersolls on the Monday before our departure, and were told that the Colonel insisted on disobeying the doctors and seeing us, if only for a minute. The time fixed for the interview was Tuesday afternoon. Meanwhile the family showed us the best hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Brown took us to the theatre, where we saw Mr. Mansfield, a great American actor, wasting his powers on a trumpery play. Mrs. Brown was profuse in regrets; she had hoped to give us an opportunity of seeing Mr. Mansfield in *Richard III*. After the performance we returned to the Ingersolls', and took supper with them. Mrs. Ingersoll was there, with her sister, Mrs. Farrell, Mr. Farrell, Miss Farrell, Mr. and Mrs.

Brown, and Miss Maud Ingersoll. I had seen very little of Miss Ingersoll, and I was glad to be in her society for an hour. She is cast in a robust physical mould than her younger sister. Her face and head are powerful, and the dark eyes show plenty of "soul" and a certain sweet tenderness, without which a woman may be handsome, but cannot be beautiful. The two sisters are admirable foils to each other. Mrs. Brown, to use a French phrase, is a warm blonde; Miss Ingersoll is a pronounced brunette. A lucky man has the former to wife; and some good man has missed a great stroke of luck in not winning the other. However, the Ingersolls love each other so that they cannot bear to part. Mrs. Ingersoll told me that the Colonel had always said to his daughters, "Never marry unless you must"; and, reaching back to clasp her unmarried daughter's hand, the fond mother said: "I think we shall keep Maud." I smiled, but inwardly I sighed. I understood the mother's heart, yet I remembered the saying of a noble American woman, whose name I have forgotten, that she was only half a woman till she was married, and only three-fourths of a woman till she was a mother.

Mrs. Farrell is a remarkably bright woman, and her husband bears "good fellow" upon his face. He is the Colonel's publisher, and I should say he is wide awake at the business.

On the Tuesday afternoon we saw Ingersoll himself in his bedroom. Mrs. Brown told us that we were the only persons her father had seen outside the family since his illness. It was against the doctors' peremptory orders for him to see us at all, and she begged us not to stay more than five minutes; which we readily promised, for we would rather not have seen him at all (much as we should have felt the loss) than have done him the slightest injury. We found the Colonel looking better than we expected, though he was obviously weakened. The sciatica was better, and his complexion was fairly good. What troubled him most was his nerves; he felt too emotional. But nothing could damp his humor or quell the merry twinkle in his deep eyes. Talking of hotels, apropos of those we had stayed at, he said of a certain establishment that it used to be much patronised by English people, as "the uncomfartableness reminded them of home." Another hotel, famous for high charges, gave him a frightful three days' bill, and before paying it he went to interview the manager. "I told him," said Ingersoll, "that I didn't want to buy the hotel, and asked him when he expected the other two instalments." The manager knocked off some forty dollars.

Ingersoll inquired about our trip with the greatest kindness, and told us how we ought to manage if we ever came to America lecturing again. As we were talking the family had dropped one by one into the room, and presently we were all chattering at sixty miles an hour. We looked at the ladies and rose to go. "What's the hurry?" said Ingersoll. We told him we were going to the banquet. "What time's that?" he asked, and we were obliged to say. "Well," he said, "you've got more than half an hour, and you're not going till the time's up." So we sat down again for a minute or two, and then we insisted on leaving. We said good-bye, and good-bye again. It was hard to go, but we had to. The last look I had of him as I left the room dwells in my memory, and will dwell there in constant freshness, until I have the pleasure of seeing him again. Downstairs we spent half an hour with the family, by that time including Mr. Brown, and after leave-taking on leave-taking we went off to the banquet at the Marlborough.

G. W. FOOTE.

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,  
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow:  
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare  
And we can conquer, though we may not share  
In the rich quiet of the afterglow

What is to come.

—W. E. Henley.

## Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

### I.

A GREAT ocean liner was on fire, and the lurid flames threw an angry glare over the midnight sea. All the boats had been lowered, and, crowded with passengers and crew, had pulled away into the darkness, except the last boat which lay alongside with its human freight. Three men stood on the deck of the doomed ship. One was the captain, another was a Roman Catholic priest who had spent forty years of his life ministering to a leper settlement on an island in the Pacific, and who was at last returning home; the third was a quiet, retiring passenger who had attracted very little notice on board, except that people had remarked on his never attending "divine service" in the first class saloon on Sundays.

"Room for only one more, sir," shouted the officer in charge of the boat. "It is time we got clear, sir, I think. She seems to be settling down forward."

"Well, gentlemen," said the captain, with a smile, "which of you is it to be?"

"Not I, captain," said the priest, quietly. "After spending more than half my life in self-sacrifice, I am not going to spoil it all by saving that life at the expense of others."

"Nor I," said the other passenger. "I believe in no future reward for self-sacrifice or heroism such as you, father, have so nobly shown. But I try to regulate my actions with a view to the best interests of my fellow-men, and I think we should now act in accordance with this principle. The reverend father here has no human ties. I am myself unmarried, and have no near relatives to mourn my death. But you, captain, have, I believe, a wife and family at home. You are obviously the one who should step into that boat."

"And leave my ship while there is a single soul on board?" asked the captain. "My wife would be the first—after my own conscience—to upbraid me for such cowardice, and I should never be able to look any man in the face again."

Just at this moment a shriek of terror sounded from the direction of the engine-room, and a wretched lascar fireman rushed wildly on deck. He had apparently been forgotten in the general confusion, and was now half mad with terror.

"Ah!" exclaimed the captain, "this removes our difficulty. Here at last is someone who, I fancy, is quite willing to save his life at the expense of others. Poor fellow," he continued, addressing the lascar; "are you very frightened?"

"Oh, yes, yes, sahib," whined the man. "For the love of God do not leave me behind; let me get into the boat."

"Certainly," said the captain. "Jump in quick—that's right. Clear away, lads, and stand by with the other boats till she sinks."

Farewells were shouted as the boat drew away, and the three men in the ruddy glare of the deck grimly fastened on their lifebelts and silently shook hands with each other. Scarcely had they done so when the great ship gave a sudden lurch forwards, and then plunged down to her doom amid the thunder of her exploding boilers and the horrid hissing of the devouring flames as the waters poured over them.

Then darkness and silence fell over the midnight deep.

### II.

Mr. William Sikes had enjoyed a fairly successful career along the pleasant paths of gentlemanly crime. His first achievement in this field consisted of some ingenious mathematical operations in the ledger of a bank of which he was cashier. This brought him some five thousand pounds, though, of course, it necessitated a rather hurried departure from the country as soon as the said mathematical operations were discovered. After a brief period of retirement in foreign parts his next exploit was a neat little transaction with a Hamburg diamond merchant in which Mr. Sikes was again eminently successful. After another year or two of foreign travel—strictly incognito—we find Mr. Sikes settled down in London and drawing a steady income as an astrologer (with advertisements in all the religious papers) but after a time, finding the fortune telling business too overcrowded, he started the patent medicine enterprise. His speciality was a preparation for reducing corpulence, and this proved so successful—not so much in reducing other people's corpulence as in maintaining his own—that all Europe was soon flooded with his advertisements of Purple Pills for Ponderous People.

He now thought he might as well have more than one iron in the fire, so, while still engaged in reducing human corpulence, he proceeded to float a company to work some marvellously productive pewter mines in Paraguay. The shares were over-subscribed within a week of issue, and Mr. Sikes had amassed quite a respectable little fortune

before the shareholders discovered that there were no pewter mines in Paraguay, or, indeed, anywhere else, since pewter didn't come out of mines.

Unfortunately, this necessitated another hurried departure from England, so Mr. Sikes sought fresh woods and pastures new (and equally green) in the United States. Having brought with him several million boxes of his purple pills—which had slightly changed color from exposure to damp—he hit upon the happy idea of pasting new labels on the boxes and advertising them as an infallible cure for leanness, under the name of Blue Boluses for Bare Bones—the opposite effects wrought by the pills on opposite sides of the Atlantic amply testifying to the marvellous properties of this preparation.

But Mr. Sikes's most successful enterprise was undoubtedly his last. Finding that the sale of his blue boluses, extensive though it was, did not bring in enough cash to permit of that luxurious style of living to which he had become accustomed, he decided to start a new religious sect. As he was by this time an elderly man with a long white beard, and looked something like the Bible story-book illustrations of the Prophet Elijah, he seemed well qualified by nature to start a new religion. After careful consideration and much Biblical study, he concluded that the Old Testament prophets, though excellent in their way, did not afford as much scope for a new religion as that latest of their tribe, John the Baptist. So he decided to make that hero to some extent his model, though he did not adopt camel's hair as wearing apparel, and it is probable that no amount of persuasion would have induced him to eat a locust.

Baptism, therefore, was the cardinal doctrine of Mr. Sikes's evangel, and to express its thoroughgoing and downright character he called his disciples the Church of the Unmitigated Baptists. The novel part of the doctrine was its insistence on baptism with hot water as universally necessary to salvation. Hot water, and plenty of it, was the keynote of Mr. Sikes's teaching, and in his hands the rite of Holy Baptism became almost undistinguishable from a warm bath.

The startling novelty of this doctrine, coupled with the passionate fervor of the preacher and his venerable and prophet-like appearance ensured from the very outset the complete success of the new cult. Travelling all over the States in a luxurious Pullman car, Mr. Sikes preached Unmitigated Baptism to enormous crowds. Thousands joined the new Church; money flowed into the treasury in a continuous golden torrent; and Mr. Sikes became wealthy beyond his most sanguine dreams. His only regret was that he had not thought of starting a new religion from the very first instead of following the more risky paths of gentlemanly crime.

III.

The new vicar of the quiet country parish of Ditchley-under-Mud was very High Church. In the grand old parish church he soon substituted a pretty "Altar" for the plain-looking "Communion Table," and were it not for the remonstrances of the churchwardens would have even banished the Ten Commandments from the wall above it, as savoring too much of Protestantism. However, he decked his altar with the usual High Church paraphernalia of cross, candlesticks, and flowers, and, of course, lost no time in starting "Early Celebrations" and daily services, which he was careful to call "Matins" and "Evensong."

But these new rites and ceremonies did not seem to appeal very forcibly to the inhabitants of Ditchley-under-Mud, for absolutely no one attended them at first. The good old-fashioned, solid, stolid Sunday service, held in the honest broad daylight, was all they needed for their spiritual sustenance. But after the first week or so the vicar noticed what he hoped was the beginning of better things. He observed that one young man regularly attended not only Matins and Evensong, but every Early Celebration without fail, kneeling reverently in a pew at the far end of the church, and staring altarwards with rapt and earnest gaze as the sacred rites proceeded. This seemed to the vicar to give good augury of the Ritualistic movement among the simple folk of Ditchley-under-Mud, and he saw in his mind's eye glorious visions of a surpliced choir, with incense and a processional cross at "High Celebrations," in the not distant future.

But, alas, these hopes were doomed to disappointment. Going his pastoral rounds one day, he saw on the road in front of him the devout youth on whom his bright visions had been founded exchanging a passing nod with a farm laborer. On approaching the latter, the vicar said, "Good morning, Hodge. Would you mind telling me the name of that young man who has just passed you? I am deeply interested in him."

"Interested in him, be ye, parson?" returned Hodge, in a tone of some surprise.

"Yes, indeed I am," replied the vicar. "I have been very pleased to notice his regular and devout attendance at the

daily services and early celebrations. He has not failed to be present even at the six o'clock celebrations on saints' days. I only wish," added the vicar, in a tone of some severity, "that all of you in Ditchley were like him. We want a deeper spiritual life in the parish, and this can only be attained by constant attendance on the means of grace afforded by the Church."

But Hodge only burst into loud laughter, and said: "Well, parson, I'm afeard Ditchley would be a queerish sort of place if we was all like that poor looney. Why, didn't ye know, sir, as he was only poor Daft Joe? A quiet enough lad, and harmless, but soft, parson—uncommon soft. That be why he's been mooning around at yer mattinges and evingsongs." And, touching his hat, Hodge passed on his way with a broad and unrestrained smile.

It was naturally a great disappointment to the vicar to find that he had mistaken for devotion to High Church doctrine and ceremony only an impulse of curiosity acting on a disordered intellect. But the incident was highly enjoyed by the bucolic frequenters of the Blue Boar that evening, when Hodge related how the vicar had expressed a wish that all the inhabitants of Ditchley-under-Mud could rise to the spiritual level of Daft Joe, the village idiot.

"The impressions that a sermon can make are by no means all of one kind. Some would class among the most effective of preachers the divine whose pulpit gifts saved the Earl of Lauderdale's life. The Earl was despaired of, because he could not get the sleep which his medical attendants pronounced necessary to his recovery. Then his son, a queer boy who was considered rather 'daft,' exclaimed, 'Sen' for that preaching man frae Livingstone, for faither aye sleeps in the kirk.' The minister came and held forth, and the earl fell asleep and recovered. And the boy who had thus proved himself possessed of wits was thenceforth properly educated and grew up to be the famous Duke of Lauderdale."—*Daily Chronicle* (Dec. 28.)

A HACKNEYED, BUT OFTEN MISQUOTED, PROVERB.

Love is a boy by poets stoyl'd;  
Then spare the rod and spoil the child.  
—Butler, "Hudibras," Part II., Canto I., line 843.

He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.—*Proverbs* xiii. 24.

The shouts of one's enemies are useful and give point and vitality to one's triumph. A friend wearies sooner in praise than an enemy in abuse. To abuse does not hurt. Enemies are ignorant of this fact. They cannot help insulting us, and this constitutes their use. They cannot hold their tongues, and thus keep the public awake.—*Victor Hugo*.

The smoke ascends  
In a rosy and golden haze. The spires  
Shine, and are changed. In the valley  
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,  
Closing his benediction,  
Sinks, and the darkening air  
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—  
And her great gift of sleep.

—W. E. Henley.

Obituary.

We deeply regret to report the death of Mr. Cyril Charles Restick, of London, which occurred on Friday, December 22, when he was only twenty-three years of age. Mr. Restick was a highly intelligent young man, an ardent Freethinker, and an eminently successful propagandist. Having the cause truly at heart, he succeeded in winning numerous converts to Freethought. He was brought up a Protestant, but at one time seriously thought of joining the Catholic Church. He was supplied with special books to confirm him in the Catholic faith; but the careful perusal of those books made him a Freethinker. In the business with which he was connected there lay before him a brilliant future, for he had already risen from the position of an office-boy to the managership of his department. He was cremated at Golder's Green on Thursday, December 28, where a Secular Service was conducted.—J. T. L.

On December 30, the remains of Mrs. Rocket (aged 49), wife of Ralph Rocket, one of the old Bradlaugh guard, were laid to rest in Burmantofts Cemetery, Leeds. In accordance with the Rationalist philosophy which guided and sustained the deceased throughout her mature years, a Secular burial service was impressively read at the grave to a large gathering of friends and relatives by Bert Killip.—G. WEIR.

**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.**

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Curse of Creeds."

**OUTDOOR.**

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.45, Mrs. Boyce, a Lecture.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Ivan Paperno and Walter Bradford. Newington Green: 7.30, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture. Highbury Corner: Wednesday, at 8, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture.

**COUNTRY.****INDOOR.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, F. E. Willis, "Can We Follow Jesus?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 6.30, F. G. Jones, "Will Christianity Save Us?"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Sidney Wollen, "What is Blasphemy?"

**Ralph Cricklewood,**

A Twentieth Century Critical and Rational  
Exposé of Christian Mythology.

(IN THE FORM OF A NOVEL.)

By **STEPHEN FITZ-STEPHEN.**

*A Well-Wisher of the Human Family.*

**388 pages, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.**

Post Free.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

**FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT**

By **G. W. FOOTE.**

First Series, cloth . . . . 2s. 6d.

Second Series cloth . . . . 2s. 6d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

**SUPPLIES A LONG FELT WANT.**

READY ON JANUARY 1.

**Determinism**

OR

**Free Will?**

BY

**C. COHEN.**

*Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.*

A clear and able exposition of the subject in  
the only adequate light—the light of evolution.

**CONTENTS.**

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will."  
III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged  
Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The  
Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications  
of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A  
Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

**PRICE ONE SHILLING NET**

(POSTAGE 2d.)

Published by the WALTER SCOTT COMPANY.

Also on Sale by

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

**THE SECULAR SOCIETY**

(LIMITED)

*Company Limited by Guarantee.*

*Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.*

*Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.*

*Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.*

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year.

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Batcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

*A Form of Bequest.*—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

### NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st., London, E.C.

#### Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

#### Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation .....

Dated this ..... day of ..... 190.....

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

#### Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Free-thought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organisations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommodious dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.

America's Freethought Newspaper.

### THE TRUTH SEEKER.

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.

CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.

G. E. MACDONALD ... .. EDITOR.  
L. K. WASHBURN ... .. EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscription in advance	...	\$3.00
Two new subscribers	...	5.00
One subscription two years in advance	...	5.00

To all foreign countries, except Mexico, 50 cents per annum extra  
Subscriptions for any length of time under a year, at the rate of 25 cents per month, may be begun at any time.

Freethinkers everywhere are invited to send for specimen copies, which are free.

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,  
Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,  
62 VESBY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

### PAMPHLETS by C. COHEN.

- An Outline of Evolutionary Ethics ... 6d.  
Principles of ethics, based on the doctrine of Evolution.
- Socialism, Atheism, and Christianity.. 1d.
- Christianity and Social Ethics ... 1d.
- Pain and Providence ... .. 1d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon street, E.C.

### A NEW (THE THIRD) EDITION OF

## FROM FICTION TO FACT. By F. BONTE.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

REVISED AND ENLARGED.  
SHOULD BE SCATTERED BROADCAST.

SIXTY-FOUR PAGES.  
PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

### DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Being a Three Hours' Address to the Jury before the Lord Chief Justice of England, in answer to an Indictment or Blasphemy, on April 24, 1883.

With Special Preface and many Footnotes

Price FOURPENCE. Post free FIVEPENCE.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

---

# SUNDAY EVENING FREETHOUGHT LECTURES

(Under the Auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd.)

AT

## SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL.

January 7.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE:

“The Curse of Creeds.”

„ 14.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE:

“The World to Come.”

„ 21.—Mr. J. T. LLOYD:

“The True Meaning of Death.”

„ 28.—Mr. C. COHEN:

“What the World Pays for Religion.”

---

Doors open at 7. Chair taken at 7.30.  
Admission Free. Front Reserved Seats 1s.  
Questions and Discussion Invited.

---

## London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner

Under the auspices of the National Secular Society's Executive

AT THE

### HOLBORN RESTAURANT,

ON

Tuesday Evening, January 9, 1912.

---

Chairman: Mr. G. W. FOOTE.

---

Tickets 4s. each, including Entertainment.

(Evening Dress Optional.)

Vocal and Instrumental Music. Speeches by Leading Freethinkers.

**DINNER AT 7 p.m. PROMPT.**

APPLY FOR TICKETS AT N. S. S. OFFICE, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, E.C.