

G. W. FOOTE MEMORIAL NUMBER.

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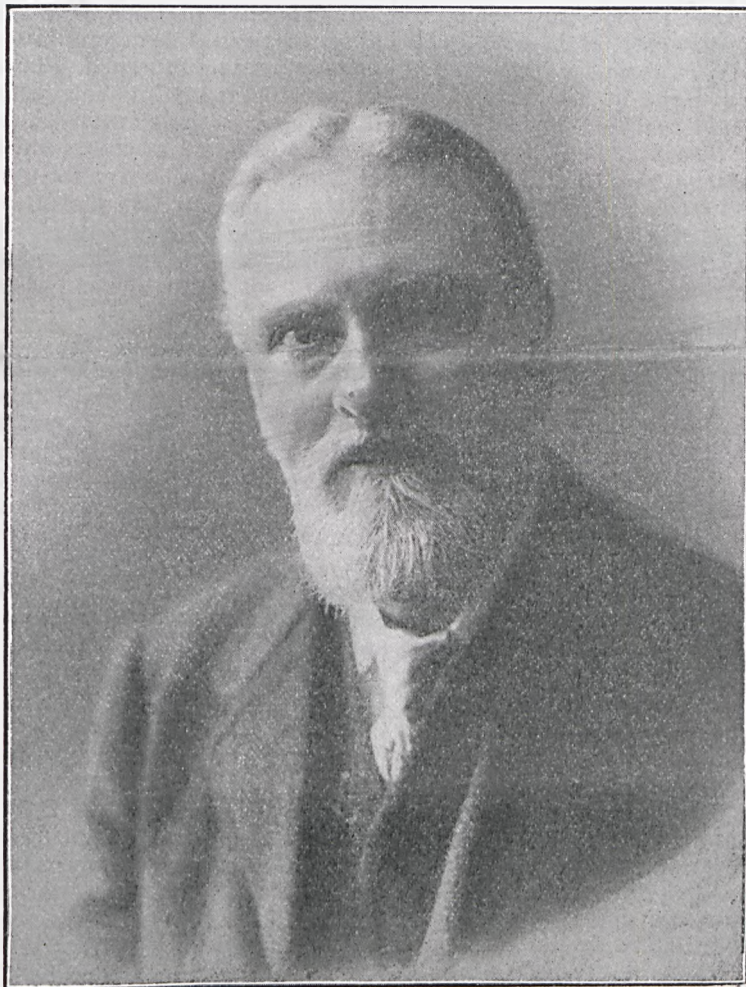
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1915

PRICE TWOPENCE

PERSONAL TRIBUTES

TO

OUR LATE LEADER.



Born,  
January 11,  
1850.

Died,  
October 17,  
1915.

GEORGE WILLIAM FOOTE.

By C. COHEN.

The skies were stern and grey on Thursday, Oct. 21, when we paid our last farewells to the cofined remains of our dead leader. It seemed as though Nature itself was paying to the man who so infallibly found the right word for every occasion the compliment of providing a setting to the funeral ceremony that should harmonise with the occasion and be attuned to the feelings of those present. Nearly every one of those who crowded the Crematorium chapel, massed in its doorway, and stretched beyond into the grounds, had sat tense with emotion or laughing with pleasure under the magic of his

oratory. And now they had gathered in a last farewell round his silent coffin—silent, and yet to us all eloquent of great deeds, great thoughts, of a heroic life spent in a cause worthy of himself. Thousands of times in the course of his long career G. W. Foote must have felt the pleasure of the master of speech as he watched his hearers responding to his words as the skilled musician draws living music from the inanimate instrument before him. But never, I think, did the living voice create a deeper impression than did the mute appeal of his cofined remains. Never had he more surely acted as an inspiration to others to emulate—at however great a distance—his own devotion to a high ideal and a great cause.



To me it will always be some consolation that he died as he would have wished—in harness. When he was taken seriously ill in February last, those around him were greatly alarmed. When I arrived at his bedside he said, with a smile, "I believe they all think I am going to die, but they are mistaken." And they were. He recovered with marvellous rapidity considering the severity of the breakdown, and as readers of the *Freethinker* know, his pen became once more busy in these columns. His interest in books and in his work revived, and he was full of new plans for the time when he returned to the office. Then came the sudden blow which was to prove fatal. When I saw him on the Friday before his death he said, "I have had another setback, but I am a curious fellow and may get all right again." But he looked the fact of death in the face with the same courage and determination that he faced Judge North many years ago. A few hours before he died he said calmly to those around him, "I am dying." And when the end came his head dropped back on the pillow, and with a quiet sigh, as of one falling to sleep, he passed away. A peaceful ending to a brave life.

The biography of G. W. Foote must be left for another occasion, if it is ever attempted. I often pressed him to write his reminiscences, and in a half-hearted manner he promised that he would do so. If he ever began the task I know not, but up to the present I have found no trace of it among his papers. His biography will, I fancy, have to be dug out of the thirty-five years' issue of the *Freethinker* and the other publications with which he was associated. And these are a record of which any man might be proud—the *Secularist*, the *Liberal*, *Progress*, the short-lived *Pioneer*, and the thirty-five-year-old *Freethinker*. Putting on one side his books and pamphlets, these are a goodly list, and the amount of "fundamental brain work"—to use his own expression—they contain is amazing. But, then, G. W. Foote always had the ability to gather round him men of calibre, and men of calibre are not attracted by ordinary mortals. Many of his old contributors are now well-known names in the world of letters and the mere bohemian world of journalism. They did not always write over their real names; but that, of course, detracted nothing from the intrinsic value of their writing.

My own connection with Freethought—as a speaker, and later as a writer—commenced, curiously enough, with Mr. Foote's election to the Presidency of the N. S. S. I have known no other President, and have wished for none other; and now, after for twenty-five years seeing that figure at the head of affairs, and knowing by experience how generally sound was his judgment upon anything that concerned the honor and the welfare of Freethought, his going leaves a gap in one's life that will not easily be filled. It is not that I never found myself in opposition to him—that would be an impossibility with two men with the capacity to do their own thinking; but I never knew him to resent a disagreement, and always found him ready to listen to anything I had to say. But these differences were on matters of policy only; on a question of principle we were always in agreement, and such differences as we had were soon adjusted. Sometimes I won him over to my point of view, but much more frequently I found the balance of reason on his side, and gave way. He had the longer experience, and in any case the greater responsibility, and it was only fitting to make due allowance for these factors.

And one always had to allow for the man's absolute devotion to the Freethought cause. Whatever may be the comparative merits of the leaders of militant Freethought since the days of brave old Richard Carlile, it is certain that Freethought has never possessed a leader that served it with such singleness of aim. There is not the shadow of a doubt that had he, with his exquisite sense of style and wide and close knowledge of English literature, devoted himself to that subject, he would have made an enduring reputation. Had he, with his keen judg-

ment, practical commonsense, and great oratorical powers, spent himself on politics, he could not have avoided becoming a power in the land. Instead, he gave himself to Freethought wholly and unreservedly. He never lost his interest in other subjects, and literature he loved with an increasing ardor as he grew older, but he allowed nothing to stand in the way of what he considered his supreme purpose in life.

G. W. Foote was in the direct line of descent of the great Freethought fighters, and worthily upheld the best traditions of that race of giants. His greatest enemies never questioned his courage, and he met adversity, from the savage sentence of Judge North to the trials and troubles that most always beset the leader of a party financially poor and suffering the burden of social ostracism.

Without being foolishly expectant about the future, he possessed an optimistic faith in the ultimate triumph of his principles that was almost equivalent to the religious man's belief in Providence. On various occasions, when the outlook seemed dark, and I wondered how things would go, I was usually met with the cheerful counsel to keep on pegging away. "Something will turn up." And most often something did. This Micawber-like faith was, I believe, the direct consequence of his supreme faith in himself and in the principles he represented. And it was this that perhaps was also responsible for his absolute refusal to compromise on any point where a principle was concerned. Then he became as hard as iron—as many on the platform and in the press discovered to their cost.

But although uncompromising in this direction, although he had a reputation for saying hard and bitter things on the platform—a reputation much greater than he really deserved—there was a broad humanity about him that won all who came into close contact with him, either personally or through intimacy with his writings. I have had ample proof of this in the shoals of letters that have reached me from people in all ranks of society, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. Some of these are published in other parts of this paper; others I am precluded from more than a reference to because they are of a private character. But their number and their variety has surprised even me. And they are not from people of "advanced" opinions alone. They come from Christians as well as Freethinkers; some from Christian ministers whose congregations might take offence did their ministers dare to publicly praise a "notorious" Freethinker. Perhaps this side of his character was nowhere better illustrated than by the attraction he had for women. He was not what is called "a ladies' man"—far from it; but I know from his correspondence the faith that women had in him, and the attraction he had for them. There was something in that strong, clean face, and that tremendous frontal development of head, that taught them he was one on whom they might rely.

For the last thirteen years of his life my own relations with him were of a growing intimacy. Until he was taken ill some thirteen years ago, I met him at meetings only. Then he placed the *Freethinker* in my hands for some three months, as he has—unfortunately—had cause to do many times since. Close intimacy brought only closer esteem, and helped to provide me with a complete disproof of things that were said of him, as they had been said of Bradlaugh, and as they are said, I suppose of all really great men in a world where little minds find satisfaction in belittling those whom it is quite impossible they should emulate, and are unable to appreciate. A man with less malice in his composition I never knew. Scandal he detested. He neither indulged in it nor cared to listen to it from others. And it was an ill-advised person who sought to gain his favor by going to him with some scandalous story about one with whom he had had a public quarrel.

One other word on this head I feel I ought to say. For several years past whenever he has been ill I have dealt with practically all his correspondence. For the last twelve months all his letters—except



those that were written by personal friends and sent direct to his private address—with that exception, all his letters have been opened by me, and I have sent him on only such as I thought he ought to see. That is a severe test to which to put any man. And yet during the whole of that time I have not read a single letter that he need have been ashamed of the whole world reading. I am proud to say this, deeply as I regret the occasion that has led me to say it. For myself I can only add that I feel proud to have had his confidence, and glad that during the last sad twelve months of his life, was able to be of service and relieve him as much as was possible from all anxiety in the conduct of this journal.

G. W. Foote is gone from our midst, but the memory of him remains, the inspiration of his life is ours, the work he did stands as a monument more enduring than stone. Thousands who are now living have benefited by his labors, and thousands yet to be born will benefit by them, even though they may never know the name of their benefactor. For a work such as his never dies. The name of him who achieves or promotes a great idea may fade from the memory of men, but the idea itself remains part of the heritage of the race, and is woven into the very structure of human society. And, knowing this, one may say of him, as I believe he would have said of others, that the better part of him is still with us. Nothing can kill that. Great ideas once born rarely die, never when they have had the opportunity of implanting themselves in the minds of thousands. The immortality gained by George William Foote is not that of the creeds, it is that larger and truer immortality which belongs to human history, an immortality made of great thoughts and heroic deeds, that invisible but unbreakable bond which binds the generations of men together, and gives us the only security for justice, progress, and human betterment.

By J. T. LLOYD.

"I weep for Adonais—he is dead!  
 O, weep for Adonais! though our tears  
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!  
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years  
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,  
 And teach them thine own sorrow, say: With me  
 Died Adonais; till the Future dares  
 Forget the past, his fate and fame shall be  
 An echo and a light into eternity."

So mourned Shelley for his friend Keats, and so mourns the Freethought Party to-day for its dead leader, George William Foote. Taking him all in all, he was a truly great man, and by his death we have sustained an irreparable loss, and all who have the good of "the Best of Causes" at heart cannot but lament. As the present number of the *Freethinker* is a Memorial one, in which several admirers of the late President are represented, I shall confine myself, chiefly, to a consideration of his literary tastes and intellectual attainments. An impression prevails in certain quarters that Freethinkers are, on the whole, exceedingly ignorant, narrow-minded, and blinded by invincible prejudice. It is an entirely erroneous impression; Freethinkers being, as a class, better informed, more intellectually alert, and fonder of reading, than any corresponding class of their believing fellow-citizens. Writing to John Morley at the beginning of 1870, George Meredith said:—

"Did I tell you that Fred and I went to sit under Bradlaugh one evening? The man is neither to be laughed nor sneered down, nor trampled. He will be a powerful speaker. I did my best to make Greenwood understand that. It was really pleasant to hear those things spoken which the parsonry provoke."

Meredith admired Bradlaugh because he saw in him the mighty force of a great, well-balanced, and well-instructed personality. Meredith admired Mr. Foote for the same reason, and wrote him several letters expressive of that admiration.

Mr. Foote told me more than once that had he followed the natural bent of his mind he would have

given himself to the study of philosophy, in which case he would have won considerable fame as a philosopher. He had a distinctly philosophic mind, which was redeemed from all dangers of dulness by a strong dash of poetry. As a militant Freethinker he had to adapt his mind to the requirements of his mission; but in all his articles and lectures there were unmistakable evidences that he lived in constant fellowship with the master-minds of the world. He could employ ridicule, banter, and humor with telling effect; but there was always a substratum of serious thought and high motive. Sneer, rallery, irony, and satire were but instruments by which he strove to realise a noble end. A thoughtful listener was never tempted to pronounce the speaker a flip-pant and superficial thinker. Some there were, of necessity, who had not the ability to discern the finer traits, the intellectual passion, and the ethical enthusiasm, and these often went away denouncing, even cursing, never suspecting that by such conduct they only exposed their own ignorance and stupidity. Even the hostile Judge North was reluctantly obliged to admit that his intellectual endowments were of the highest order, though he had prostituted them to the service of the Devil. What Justice North characterised as "the service of the Devil," we regard as the noblest service any man can render to his fellow-beings.

Take *Bible Romances* as an illustration of the truth of the contention of this article. This book bristles with fun and wit and sarcasm, which to a blind worshiper of the Bible must appeal as essentially irreverent and blasphemous, but which by a thoughtful reader are seen to be based upon sound critical principles. It is a profoundly scientific work, enlivened by a playful imagination. Much the same could be said of most of his articles and lectures. His banter was invariably the servant of his intellect or his heart, or of both. At his best he was exceptionally fine. I have a vivid recollection of a lecture I had the privilege of hearing some eight or ten years ago at the Queen's (Minor) Hall. It was entitled, "Man's Discovery of Himself," and a most memorable deliverance it proved to be. It was simple, direct, humorous, inspiring; but what struck me most was the vein of subtle philosophy that ran through it. I have heard Beecher and Bright at their very best; but I never listened to anything that stirred me more powerfully than that oration by our late leader. As another instance of Mr. Foote's intellectual best, I may refer to his famous article, "George Meredith: Freethinker," which appeared in the *English Review* for March, 1913. This is as fine a piece of criticism as can be found anywhere. Possibly no other man in Great Britain could have written it. Professor James Moffatt and Mr. G. M. Trevelyan are both ardent admirers of Meredith, and have contributed lucid interpretations of his works; but neither of them has caught the Meredithian point of view, or understood the evolution of the great novelist's mind, with the accuracy displayed by Mr. Foote in this article. Divines were quoting, with glee, passages from Meredith's earlier letters in tribute of Christianity, an act thus characterised in the article:—

"The dishonesty of the thing is appalling, but they are never disturbed by that consideration. The truth is that Meredith may be quoted for everything he left behind him in the course of his mental development. He passed through all the stages of emancipation, from evangelical Christianity to pure Humanism—where he remained; and his letters, like his writings, take a tone from each halting-place."

That is the whole truth in a nutshell, and Mr. Foote was, apparently, the very first to discover it.

If Mr. Foote ever had a deity whom he really worshiped, his name was Shakespeare. His friends sometimes banteringly said that he had Shakespeare on the brain; but all I am prepared to vouch for is that he had Shakespeare in his brain, which I regretfully confess I have not. He knew Shakespeare as few, even of his best critics, knew him; and for his philosophy of life he was largely indebted to the Stratford bard. Many doubtless remember the illuminating series of lectures he delivered on his various



plays at the new St. James's Hall, Great Portland-street. I sincerely hope that the work he was preparing on the great poet is in a sufficiently advanced state to allow of publication.

Like Lord Macaulay, Mr. Foote possessed a remarkably retentive memory. Of the former it is said that he had the books he loved best by heart, and the same thing was true of the latter. Not only had he read all the best books, but he knew them intimately, and could give long and *verbatim* quotations from them. During one of my pleasant visits to him I mentioned the fact that I had just been reading *Harry Richmond*, whereupon he gave the gist of the story, not stumbling over a single character's name. I said, "When did you read the book?" and he answered, "Twenty years ago." It is well-known how, at a moment's notice, he could favor an audience or a social gathering with a lengthy recitation from almost any of Shakespeare's plays. He not only retained what he read, but could produce it as occasion required. And this wonderful endowment remained with him almost to the end.

He had an excellent library, and there was not one work in it to which he was a stranger. And he loved his books, and could scarcely bear to have any of them out of his sight. It was as a book-lover, perhaps, I knew him best; being a book-lover myself. But I had various glimpses of him as a devoted husband and loving father. His home-life seemed to me to be peculiarly full of charm, surrounded by an atmosphere of peace and love, a vision of which was both a privilege and a pleasure not soon to be forgotten; and it affords me great delight to bear this testimony.

I mourn the loss of a much-valued friend, whom I found uniformly gentle and kind and considerate. I only wish I had known him earlier, before ill-health had commenced to play havoc with his naturally splendid constitution. But though dead he shall yet speak through the work he accomplished, of which others, who knew him much longer, are more competent to deal than I.

### By HERBERT BURROWS.

THOSE of us who watched on Thursday last the disappearance into the "fire that purifieth" of the body of G. W. Foote, mourned the loss of a brave soldier of freedom and of freethought. The simple ceremony was typical of his life. That life had been spent without the glare of the self-advertisement which to some men is as the breath of their nostrils. For that he never craved or sought, and I for one, echoing, I am sure, the feelings of all, felt deeply that it was well that without funereal pomp, without the blare of trumpets or the flaunting of banners, we should bid him our last farewell in the strenuous simplicity of sorrow. True sorrow is ever simple; there is no room in the real human heart for noisy grief; so the quietude of the autumn day, the tense silence of his old comrades and friends, men and women, as they listened to the broken, heartfelt words of Mr. Cohen, the eloquent tribute of Mr. Lloyd, told the tale of inmost feeling, as no outward demonstration could possibly have done.

When we stand in the shadow of the death of one whom we have lost and for whom we mourn, to enter into the everyday details of life seems for the time almost an impertinence. The day has not yet come when the life-history of our dead friend can be even attempted—all that now can be done is to try to give the broad impressions of the strenuous years which were to him days sometimes of almost agonising stress and strain, a stress and a strain which he made a positive duty, because they were spent in the service of the freedom of humanity.

For that word "Freedom" was the watchword of his life, in the midst of that life's continual *sturm und drang*. He was ever surrounded by the storm and whirlwind which is always the lot of those who set themselves against the mental and political

conventions of their time, and this he did to the full, without fear and without stint. Courage is easy when the day is fair, when men applaud, when the times are with you, when the world smiles on you; for then it costs nothing. Only those who have practised it know how hard it is when you are almost an Ishmael among your fellows, misunderstood, reviled by those who should have honored you, counted as a pestilent disturber of the supposed peace and good order of the human life. That, as we know, was G. W. Foote's lot, and it was hard to bear. All the more honor to him that he bore it with a steadfast determination which no persecution could break, no reviling could turn back. He never claimed to be a hero, but Lowell's words may be fitly used of him:—

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes—they were souls  
that stood alone,  
While the men they agonised for hurled the contumelious stone.

The agony of the struggle for freedom is always hard to bear. G. W. Foote sometimes seemed almost to glory in it. For the struggle brings with it its own compensation, the compensation of duty well done, and the certain knowledge that one day humanity will rise to the height of the understanding of what that freedom really means. Of that he was always entirely sure, and the surety gave him his strength. In the darkest days of the American Anti-Slavery struggle, after Theodore Parker, the great Abolitionist, had married the escaped slaves, William and Ellen Craft, he wrote these lines:—

I see before my race an age or so,  
And I am sent to hew a path among the thorns,  
To take them in my flesh.  
Well, I shall lay my bones  
In some sharp crevice of the broken way.  
Men shall in better times stand where I fell,  
And singing, journey on in perfect bands  
Where I have trod alone.

Often in his life struggle, G. W. Foote was lonely; but the certainty that men would one day journey on in perfect bands, singing their songs of freedom, sustained him to the end.

At my lecture at South Place Ethical Society on Sunday, I said a few sentences on him and his work, and at the close, two women came to me. One of them said, "I did not know Mr. Foote, but I always had a prejudice against him—to-day you have entirely removed it." The other, as with tears in her eyes she warmly thanked me, told me that she had always honored and respected him since she read his article on his release from prison. That was a tribute which any man might be proud of receiving.

That famous battle of his was the only set incident of his life to which I will now refer. I disagreed with him on many things. I disagreed with part of the number of the *Freethinker* for which he was prosecuted; but joyfully I, with many others, banded ourselves together for his defence, for we felt and knew that he was right, not so much for what he said, as for his courage in saying and adhering to it for the sake of the liberty of human thought and speech—the most precious possession of mankind. His answer to the iniquitous prosecution was a noble one. My friend, Frederic Harrison, told me that his brother Charles was on the jury and that he considered Mr. Foote's speech one of the finest he ever heard. But it was all of no avail. He had to suffer bravely and uncomplainingly, and never will there be such a suffering again, for the battle is now practically won. I was present at the breakfast given to him at the Hall of Science after his release, and even then I strongly felt that one day it would so be.

In every humanitarian cause G. W. Foote was always in the van, always in the front when a battle was to be fought for human rights and human freedom, for justice, and for peace. We mourn his death—that is but natural—but in its shadow the note I would strike is that of his own hope and his own courage. He fought ever for freedom—we who survive him can do no less. Over his ashes should be inscribed the three thousand years old saying, true now as then:—

Truth liveth and is strong,  
She conquereth and endureth for evermore.



## By MIMNERMUS.

OTHER pens than mine will write of George William Foote in his public capacity as orator, writer, and apostle. I will here write of him as a man. Of his manifold activities for advanced movements, others are better qualified to speak, perhaps, than I am, but I count it a rare privilege that I had the happiness of a lengthy and intimate acquaintance with him.

George William Foote had genius. There is no other word to express his extraordinary abilities in so many directions. He could have done almost anything supremely well. Had he turned his talents to the law, he would have reached the judicial bench. So swiftly and keenly did his brain operate, that he seemed to work by intuition, by a kind of sixth sense, and professional lawyers were baffled by the accuracy of his decisions. Even in politics he had X-ray insight. Before the execution of Ferrer, he had divined the terrible issue, and he said so boldly at a public meeting. In matters of this kind he had no doubt, an invincible belief in his own judgment, and magnificent courage. When he founded the Secular Society, Ltd., he said to me, "It will prove to be a Rock of Gibraltar"; and many years after, the decision after decision in the Law Courts proved the accuracy of his forecast. Odds against him always nerved him, and he never knew the meaning of fear. Ever a fighter, he was always in the forefront of the battle. By the camp-fire, and in the scant leisure of a busy life, he was a most delightful companion, with a boy's zest for harmless pleasure. So we loved him, and admired "this side idolatry" his great gifts.

He had a rare knowledge of literature, and he sometimes amused himself by hunting bargains in the booksellers' shops. He hated to part with his books, and he treated them with loving care, seldom marking them with pencil, but using slips of paper for notes. His vast knowledge was ever at the service of his friends, and I have known him to stop his own work for half an hour to verify a quotation for me, "for accuracy was necessary," he said with a smile, "even in a journalist."

His generosity was only bounded by his resources. No case of distress left him unmoved, and I have seen the tears in his eyes at sights of human suffering. He would inconvenience himself in his anxiety to help others. He did these acts of kindness in a truly modest way. He would order fruit and wine to be sent regularly to a sick friend, and the gift would be anonymous. One wet evening we were passing a poor old white-haired woman selling boot-laces by the kerb, and he left my side and gave the poor creature half-a-sovereign, and he would not wait for any thanks. For all children he had a special love, and they idolised him. This great-hearted man, whose voice could thrill the hearts of thousands, was never happier than when he had a tiny prattler on his knee.

He had a very ready wit. I apologised to him once by saying that I could not find time to do something. He replied, "You have all the time there is, my boy." When some pound notes were handed to him very much the worse for wear, he said, "This is indeed filthy lucre." Once I rallied him on the length of his "Acid Drops" by saying they ought to be called "Acid Tablets." "Yes!" he said, "but your's ought to be entitled 'Salphuric Acid Drops.'"

We, who knew him well, are thinking as much of the man as of his career, sorrowing, hardly able to believe that we shall never again hear him talk, see him smile. He was very simple in his manner of living, singularly abstemious, and keen as a boy for any quiet pleasure such as billiards or boating, yet bold and of iron will when occasion required. In his case he was compelled to use some of his matchless energy in the mere routine of business, which he never cared for. "I am not a tradesman," he once told me. It is not a mistake that others are likely to imitate, and the fiery, restless courage which

accounted for it is a quality which the world can very ill spare. What it can achieve needs now no record: it is written largely in the history of our time, and in a life as full and as courageous as any in the annals of freethought. He was a great and a good man.

## By MARK H. JUDGE.

IT was as a pioneer of Sunday Opening that I first met G. W. Foote. From its formation in 1875, he gave his support to the Sunday Society for Opening Museums, Art Galleries, Libraries, and Gardens on Sunday. He was one of the selected speakers at the Society's first public annual meeting (May 27, 1876), when James Heywood, F.R.S., the first President, was in the chair, and the other speakers included Thomas Burt, M.P., Moncure D. Conway, Rev. Septimus Hansard, Geo. Jacob Holyoake, and Miss Anna Swanwick. Dean Stanley succeeded Mr. Heywood as President, and presided at the next public annual meeting, when the speakers included Joseph Aroh, Professor Thos. H. Huxley, Professor Henry Morley, Dr. Benjamin Ward Richardson, and Professor John Tyndall.

In May, 1876, there was a Loan Collection of Scientific Apparatus at the South Kensington Museum; the resolution to which G. W. Foote spoke had reference to this, and was as follows:—

That the loan collection now open in South Kensington, affording as it does information with reference to the apparatus used in the advancement of science by the most eminent philosophers, and comprising not only the latest improvements and inventions, but also many instruments of historic interest, this meeting approves of an appeal being made to those having charge of the collection, to allow the same to be seen and described on at least one Sunday afternoon before the close of the Exhibition.

This modest request for at least one rational Sunday afternoon at South Kensington was refused, but the resolution was not in vain. It was one of the steps which led not only to the Sunday opening of all our national science and art collections, but to the more remarkable fact that all opposition has long ceased.

In this, my first experience of G. W. Foote, Editor of the *Freethinker*, he was simply asking that those who wished to spend Sunday in a particular way might have the freedom to do so. It was the simple love of freedom that moved him, not a personal desire to see the interesting collection at South Kensington. This love of freedom for its own sake was the leading trait of his public life. The freedom he desired for himself could never be complete until it was shared by others.

Many have regretted that G. W. Foote should have devoted himself so much to Secularism. I shared that regret, as I felt that a wider field, in public office, in Parliament, would have been a better environment for his great powers. But it was to be otherwise, and, as with all pioneers, he had to suffer and to be misunderstood by those who teach that "Change is rash, and ever was so"; those who tell us "We are happy as we are." If his strongest opponent would only have acquired knowledge of G. W. Foote instead of accepting the misrepresentations of him by bigots, they might, those still remaining opponents, have had the satisfaction of knowing that he was at least reasonable in the propaganda to which he devoted himself. This, perhaps, cannot be better shown than in the following quotation from an article written in 1910:—

Whether there be a future life or not—which no one can positively affirm, and no one can positively deny—the natural issues of human conduct are inevitable in this life. Secularism bids us be true to ourselves and our opportunities now. Let us realise as far as may be, by practical agencies, that Earthly Paradise where the flower and fruit of happiness shall bloom for the delight and sustenance of all. And let us reflect how much nearer realisation that Paradise would be if a tenth of the time, the energy, the ability, the enthusiasm, and



the wealth that have been devoted to making men fit candidates for heaven had been devoted to making them fit citizens of earth. The grosser evils of society would by this time only remain as traces of what once was, and a certain prospect of reasonable happiness and usefulness would be the heritage of every child born into the world.

I have said that he loved freedom for its own sake. This was shown in connection with the Orange riots in Liverpool, in September, 1909, when G. W. Foote entered a most vigorous protest against the bigotry of the Liverpool Protestants, which went so far that an Orange mob made an attack on unoffending Catholic children. Dealing with this tumult, he wrote:—

This sort of thing, of course, is very regrettable. We may even call it a disgrace to Liverpool, and indirectly to the whole of England. Such a state of affairs ought to be dealt with firmly. Mob violence should not be tolerated for a moment in a civilised community. It makes no difference whether Catholics attack Protestants, or Protestants attack Catholics, or both of them attack Freethinkers; the first duty of the public authorities is to maintain public peace and order and secure to every citizen the free exercise of his rights. If it takes all the police in the place to do this, and the soldiers behind them, it should be done. There should be no temporising. Disorder should be sternly suppressed. Those who attack their fellow-citizens in the name of religion, or anything else, are waging war against human society; and mere self-preservation dictates that they should be brought to heel as promptly as possible, and with all the severity that may be necessary. We would protect the Liverpool Catholics at all cost, just as we would protect Protestants, Jews, Freethinkers, or any other denomination.

Involved as we are in the greatest War of all time, it is fitting to make some reference to the views of G. W. Foote in this connection. In the *Shadow of the Sword*, published by the Humanitarian League in 1905, he said:—

Europe is the modern Damocles. The ancient bearer of that name envied the wealth of Dionysius of Sicily. Damocles ascended the throne and gazed admiringly on the wealth and splendor around him. But looking up, he perceived a sword hanging over his head by a single hair. The sight so terrified him that he begged to be removed from his position. Europe likewise sits at its feast of life, but the fatal weapon suspended overhead mars its felicity. Serpents twine in the dance, arms clash in the song, the meats have a strange savor, there is a demoniac sparkle in the wine, and a poisonous bitterness in "the dregs" of the cup. All is darkened by the Shadow of the Sword.

He was one of the few to give prominence to the Victories of Peace. He wrote of the Alabama Arbitration as follows:—

The Geneva Arbitration of 1872 on the Alabama dispute was the inauguration of a new era. The arbitrators' award mulcted England in £3,000,000, but that sum is trivial to what the dispute might have cost us had it ranked into a war.

The new era inaugurated by the victory of the Alabama Arbitration has been slow in maturing for the simple reason that its light has in most places been hidden under a bushel. Of any great battle you can obtain prose and verse on every hand, but to-day, in all London, a book telling the story of the settlement of the Alabama Claims cannot be had for love or money. The victories of peace are still unfortunately not renowned as are those of war. This must be changed. We owe a debt of gratitude to the nineteenth century which will not be paid so long as we are without a noble monument to the Statesmen who won the Victory of the Alabama Arbitration—a victory without a tragedy, a conflict in which those who lost shared the glory with those who won. The desire is not for a monument the less to the noble dead who have given their lives in defence of civilisation, but the desire is that we bear in equal remembrance those noble souls who made that civilisation worthy the great sacrifice, and who strove to so complete it that the time may come when the sacrifice will no longer be required.

Being a practical man, he realised that as the cessation of duelling in this country was no warrant for

disbanding the police, so the cessation of war will not warrant a discontinuance of our Army and Navy. For generations we have, in fact, considered the bearing of arms as a matter of police, and not otherwise a proper occupation for sensible people; and the only compensation for the terrible War through which we are passing will be the recognition of this principle by the civilised nations. When this is done, Soldiers will make way for International Policemen, and the civilised nations of the world will collectively accept the responsibility of maintaining and enforcing International Law.

The following is another quotation from the *Shadow of the Sword*:—

War is just in self-defence, or in defence of a neighbor unjustly attacked. We are not of those who believe in the refusal of aid between nations in all circumstances. The sword may be, for some time yet, as necessary as the lancet, but it should never be drawn except against the enemies of mankind. "The blood of man," said Burke, "should never be shed but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our friends, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity; the rest is crime."

Those who have heard G. W. Foote's lectures on Shakespeare will be glad to know that there is a prospect of these being embodied in a volume, for his appreciation of the Bard of Stratford moved him to eloquence of a high order. Shelley was also a great favorite with G. W. Foote, who himself had the happiness of recognition by some of the brightest intellects of his time. On one occasion he received a contribution for the *Freethinker* without any accompanying letter. Recognising the writing on the cheque, he wrote for instructions as to acknowledgment, and received the following reply:—

April 23rd, 1909. Box Hill, Dorking. Dear Mr. Foote,—Gifts of money should be unsigned contributions. But as a question of supporting your paper, my name is at your disposal.—Very truly, George Meredith.

I cannot do better than close my tribute to the memory of G. W. Foote than by quoting the beautiful dream given to us by Leigh Hunt:—

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase)  
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,  
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,  
An angel, writing in a book of gold:—  
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,  
And to the presence in the room he said,  
"What writest thou?"—The vision raised its head,  
And with a look made of all sweet accord,  
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."  
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"  
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,  
But cheery still; and said "I pray thee, then,  
Write me as one that loves his fellow men."

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night  
It came again with a great wakening light,  
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,  
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

By F. J. GOULD.

GEORGE WILLIAM FOOTE'S master-qualities were courage and concentration of purpose, and in the service of these two qualities he employed a richly stored mind and a robust common sense.

Many years ago, I spent a long morning with him among his books. He had no controversial platform to defend, nor had he need to convert me. We talked of Romans and Greeks, of Elizabethan poets, Paritan divines, eighteenth-century Deists, of nineteenth-century singers and iconoclasts and pathfinders. On the side of literature, he spoke with the ease of a man of letters and the breadth of a philosopher. On the side of theology, he not only displayed ample knowledge of Paritan and Anglican treatises, but he knew how to respect and praise largeness and candor and virility even though associated with a creed he rejected. If he jested at Spurgeon, he honored Hooker. By the mediæval spirit of English law, he was counted a blasphemer, and he was sent to prison for a year for reviling things holy. Well, I have conversed with all sorts



of religious men, from a venerable Indian *Sadhu* to Catholic priests, church-pioneers in slums, saintly village clergymen, Presbyterian ministers, missionaries, and the rest, and I cannot say that any of them were superior to Foote in grave and manly appreciation of the finest and deepest elements of human nature. That is my opinion after reading heaps of his articles, hearing a long series of his lectures, and exchanging thoughts with him under my own roof. Nor had he any prejudice against such a noble conception as that of the Religion of Humanity, though no man had ever more drastically cleared his mind of belief in Gods. His eye was keen to detect, in history, or biography, or contemporary life, the signs of originality, courage, and independence. Hence, he had his great admirations,—for France, for the French genius, for Gambetta, for military administrators like Kitchener, for honest and strong souls such as Defoe, Paine, and Cobbett, for poets of broad humanism such as Thomson ("B. V.") and Meredith, for sane and genial men of antiquity such as Plutarch. Some of the Leicester folk, who used to crowd to hear him speak from the platform of the Secular Hall, even preferred his lectures on literature—on Shakespeare, Tennyson, or Shelley, for example—to his vivid and entertaining assaults on the philosophy of Moses or the Four Evangelists. One of his most moving recitations was the rendering from memory of Tennyson's *Rizpah*, and a packed assembly, which had a few moments before laughed uproariously at his caricature of some stupid churchism, would subside into a stillness that had a thrill in it as Foote told the story of a mother's devotion.

Infinitely removed from Ignatius Loyola's creed, he had Loyola's quality of concentration on a life-purpose. Quite early in his career, he had concluded that the Christian system had outworn its value, was a hindrance to rational thought and social progress, and must be thrust out. Had he chosen, he had ample capacity for academic study, and he might have confined himself to the gentle irony of a Matthew Arnold, or the polished essay methods of a Huxley. Foote was republican, radical, and popular in his temperament and convictions. He determined to attack orthodoxy in the street, the cheap hall, the common press. I think I first saw him about 1880, when he was debating with a Mr. Cowper on Christian origins at the Hall of Science in Old-street, before an audience of working men and women, whose fathers might have been Chartists, Owenites, strenuous Trades Unionists. Mr. Cowper had learnedly commented on texts which variously traced the birth of Jesus to an inn-stable and a cave. Foote rose to put two and two together in a quiet, sarcastic fashion, and, when he had disposed of the literary question, he paused, looked at us all in his calm, clear-eyed whimsical way, and said:—

"But I wonder, friends, if it occurred to you, as it did to me, when listening to the able speech of the Christian lecturer, how odd it was for us here, in the nineteenth century, to be seriously discussing whether God Almighty was born in a stable or somewhere else!"

The laughter that followed was enough to doom half-a-dozen creeds.

It was for saying things like that, and for expressing such ideas in comic pictures, that Foote was tried and condemned. But I repeat, he was as earnest, devoted, and conscientious in this image-breaking enterprise as was Loyola in his effort to strengthen the Church of Rome by the establishment of the Society of Jesus. Loyola served Rome, and Foote served mankind. These Christian people—yes, and those Freethinkers—entirely misunderstand the man if they suppose he "blasphemed" out of sheer anarchism or lust for jeering. He felt that the hour was come, in our British evolution, when certain ancient modes of thought must be broken, and, counting the cost, and braving all risks, and concentrating with extraordinary tenacity on this destructive task, he went in and out amongst the democracy, and eloquently uttered his purging and uncompromising satire.

Foote's personality was eminently suited to the popular platform. There was a Victorian regularity in his frock-coat, black tie, and restraint of gesture; as if he desired, as indeed he did, to fix the listeners' attention on his reasoning and his ideals rather than on the mere manner of the discourse. Tall and well-made, using with effect a singularly mellow and resonant voice, and with face and eyes that expressed a fundamental good-humor as well as an unconquerable intention of chastising error and absurdity, Foote the Atheist was yet Foote the prophet and reformer. He was a man who, as citizen, aided the political emancipation of the British people, and, as critic of theological shams, did immense service in intellectual sanitation. It is true he was put in prison for twelve months. That was, after all, a crude and clumsy way by which our nation tested the man's sincerity, courage, and moral worth. He stood the test, and England will gratefully enrol his name in the list of those who loved her, and gave their best for her welfare.

### By KERIDON.

THE passing of Mr. G. W. Foote puts one in mind of the way mankind deals with its redeemers—a procedure well reflected and re-echoed in the strange cults of savior-gods.

In a paleontological museum you will see preserved, with anxious and scrupulous care, the fossilised bones of creatures which nature, æons ago, had trampled to death with her wonted ruthless indifference. The living creature was of no account, but we honor its fossil! That may serve as a parable of the strange way humanity deals with those who seek to redeem it from the thralldom of hideous superstition. The living it slays and often buries beneath a mound of calumny, but their memories, when well fossilised by time, are often dug up and honored. While they live they are derided, scoffed at, spat upon, buffeted, and hurried away amid a blast of howls and execrations to the nearest Golgotha—a Christian honor which the notorious Judge North would have loved to bestow upon George William Foote.

If courage more intrepid than a warrior's, if great gifts as writer and speaker, if rare perspicuity of intellect, if steadfastness of purpose, if unwavering devotion to the cause of humanity, and if a life-long sacrifice to its redemption be credentials high enough to qualify for the honored esteem and gratitude of his fellows, then the urn containing the dust of G. W. Foote is as worthy of a niche in our national Valhalla as any now resting there. But, alas! that is not our method—we "stone and kill the prophets," and then leave to far distant generations to whitewash their graves! One day it will be said of him, "He fought a good fight and kept the faith," and a crown of glory will be placed upon his head.

### By WILLIAM HEAFORD.

THE death of Mr. G. W. Foote removes from our midst the last survivor of the front rank Freethinkers who belonged to the heroic school typically associated with Holyoake and Bradlaugh. The sturdy champions of Secularism and Freethought who formed the fighting battalions of the mid-Victorian revolt against Christianity—men like Richard Carlile, Charles Southwell, and their successors—were thinkers of strong mould and stern unflinching character. There were giants in those days, and their struggles, their defeats, and their triumphs made the epoch which they adorned the classic period of nineteenth century freethought in this country. At fearful odds against them, they assailed the regnant religion of our land with every weapon drawn from the armory of science and criticism, in flagrant defiance of prison and Mrs. Grundy.

The last, but not the least, of this heroic line was G. W. Foote. If the shades of the mighty dead can



meet and take mental stock of each other, they have already saluted and welcomed as their compeer the dignified and cultured presence of our late Chief. For G. W. Foote combined in his remarkable personality a rich variety of great qualities of mind and heart in fuller measure than befalls to most men. On the platform he was the peerless orator whose words were laden with quite uncommon stores of wisdom, wit, and learning. His wondrous gifts of improvisation, which were the constant admiration of all who knew him, were but the bubbling over of a copious mind which had levied contribution upon all that was pertinent to the subject he had in hand. As a public teacher he always gave unstintedly of his best; and, at his best, he stood on the highest level of intellectual greatness and of intellectual clarity.

There was nothing mean or common-place in his handling of any topic of public or private interest. Always there was the stamp of intellectual distinction and fearless independence upon his utterances. And that characteristic stamp of mental clearness and moral sanity was not only seen in the substance of his thought; it was equally shown in the texture and form—the literary grace and the exquisite refinements of language—in which he was always careful to clothe the manifestations of his mind. He rightly believed that a good thought deserved to come into the world fair-featured, with every appropriate loveliness of artistic embellishment.

In type of mind and character, G. W. Foote was essentially a hero amongst heroes, a classic amongst classics, with something, too, of classic Roman severity. With him the truth, as he conceived it, was worth the homage of time, trouble, and, above all, of self-sacrifice; and his pursuit and promulgation of the truth was like the quest of the lover after the thing most prized in his eyes, and as such, held worthy to be made lovely before the world with all the attractive apparel of good taste and beauty.

And G. W. Foote not only was a hero of free-thought, he was one of its most conspicuous martyrs. In that respect, this great iconoclast, who so ruthlessly broke the idols of tradition, conserved and handed on to us the proud tradition of the old Free-thinking stock. Carlyle, Southwell, Holyoake, and many others who labored in those grim, cruel days, tasted the bitterness of Christian love in the solitude of a Christian cell. G. W. Foote was not spared the common fate of his forerunners, and his body was made to bear the accustomed stigmata which so often seal the secular saintliness of the heroic rebels against the tyrannies and trumperies of religion. That savage sentence of twelve months' imprisonment, which, as Mr. Foote so sardonically declared, was worthy of the Christian creed, robbed him of a year's life, and burdened his constitution with the seeds of the malady which, after a long period of suffering and incapacity, brought his brilliant career to an untimely close. Our late Chief was as foully martyred and murdered as was Ferrer himself.

We who knew and loved G. W. Foote and admired the brilliancy of his genius are perhaps too near the object of our regard to be able to view him in due perspective in relation to the ulterior trend and tendency of the stirring heroic times out of which he grew, and of which he became the latest and sublimest embodiment and representative. The wider catholicity of spirit which Mr. Foote's life-work certainly made possible for friend and foe alike may, for aught we know, transform our methods and uplift our ideals. In any case, whether we continue fighting in the old trenches, with the old shot and shrapnel and asphyxiating gases assailing us, or are able to take the battle forward to a new stage made possible by the ground freshly won for us by the heroic services of our dead Chief, the name of G. W. Foote will always be cherished in the grateful veneration of countless generations of Freethinkers. Though dead, his example and inspiration will ever speak to our hearts and stir within us, and in those to whom we hand forward the good old tradition, an abiding love of the good old cause.

By S. H. SWINNY.

*President of the London Positivist Society and Editor of the "Positivist Review."*

GEORGE WILLIAM FOOTE was known to the general public almost entirely by one incident in his full and vigorous life. To the enemies of the cause to which he was devoted, he was the embodiment of ruthless destruction. To most others he was the brave martyr of human liberty, the undaunted victim of a foul injustice. He would not have wished that the memory of his sufferings or of the sufferings of those who had gone before him should ever be forgotten. Yet even while we admit that his trial and sentence were the central and most significant incidents of his life, to fix our mind exclusively on these is to do him some injustice. He was a man of great and varied qualities. As Mr. Cohen pointed out in his fine address at the funeral, few careers show so complete a devotion to a chosen purpose. And to that purpose he brought great gifts, both physical and mental. He had a splendid voice, a power of rapid thought, a literary style at once beautiful and strong. I have been told that this was moulded on that of the Judicious Hooker. I do not know how far this is true; however it originated, his style had become completely his own. But the choice, if the story be true, is characteristic. His fine taste in literature remained unaffected by his predilections in religion, and his knowledge of literature was wide. In one respect he stood out from his time. In an age especially inclined to seek a political remedy for all troubles, he cared little for politics and less for politicians. Only on one subject did he depart from this attitude—the question of freeing thought from legal restriction and securing complete religious equality. Though he considered the abatement of superstition his special work, he valued constructive thought. He was a student and admirer of Comte. But he believed that, whatever might be the case in the future, the need of the present was the destruction of the power of theology, of which, in its legal aspects, he had had so hard an experience.

Although I had heard him speak—I had even been in Court during part of his first trial—I only made his acquaintance when we became members of the executive of the Secular Education League on its foundation. There I had many opportunities of experiencing the readiness with which at any time he could supply the exact form of words the particular occasion needed. His colleagues—men of varied opinions—soon came to recognise the soundness of his judgment. The persecution he had suffered could not be without some effect; too magnanimous for bitterness or hatred, he was perhaps inclined to see slights where none were intended—it may be, more out of consideration for his Cause than for himself. He was thus sometimes a difficult colleague. But my own relations to him were always most cordial.

### G. W. Foote.

*Who died October 17, 1915.*

Oh, is he dead, and shall I never see  
The face, the form, the man whom I have praised,  
While thousands called him weak and thought him  
crazed,

This noble champion of liberty?  
Death comes to them who fear it not, and he  
Who feared not man, and never stood amazed  
At threatening dangers facing him upraised,  
Has met his final foe triumphantly.

He dies, while guns are thundering, ignored;  
One English hero's passing is forgot  
Within the sailor's and the soldier's crashing hour.  
But by one little band he was adored,  
And soon or late mankind will seek the spot  
Where lie the ashes of this man of power.

JULIAN ST. OREY.

(Personal Tributes continued on p. 698.)



## To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.—Received from March 15: Previously acknowledged, £171 18s. 10d. Received since:—C. Heaton, 2s. 6d.; J. Polphreyman, 10s. 6d.; Bath Working Man and Wife, 5s. *Per Miss Vance*: Edward Driver, £3 3s.—This Fund is now closed.

R. H. SIDE.—We think you acted wisely, under the circumstances, in not venturing such a trying journey and experience. Ninety-one is a great age, and Mrs. Foote and family know well the sincerity of your feelings towards them. Your sympathy will be deeply appreciated.

Mrs. A. T. ZILLMAN.—Your grief will be shared by many thousands. It is something to have left so many sincere friends, even though they are personally unknown to one.

E. LETCHMERE.—Your message of condolence will be welcomed by Mr. Foote's family.

H. ELLIOT.—You are right in expecting that we shall be inundated with letters. We are at present trying to grapple with a perfect mountain of them. With regard to your other query. The *Freethinker* will continue on exactly the same lines as hitherto.

JULIA ST. OREY.—Thanks for your compliment to the one whom "you never saw, but always admired."

Mrs. A. CROSS.—Your sympathetic letter has given Mrs. Foote the only help possible at the moment under the most trying conditions.

H. S. BRADLEY.—Very pleased to hear of the way you have pushed the sale of this paper. If a few others interested in the *Freethinker* were to go ahead on the same scale, we should find many of our worries left in the rear.

C. B. W. writes to point out that the third line from the bottom of his poem, "The House of Mystery," in our issue of Oct. 17, should read, "And know not the gloom." We are sorry, but our poetry reader must have been napping.

E. BURKE.—We agree with you that the proper way to estimate the work of G. W. Foote is to take the world in relation to theology as it was in 1870 and as it is in 1915. We are not claiming that the change of opinion is due to his work alone, but it is quite unquestionable that he played no small part in bringing it to pass.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ARTICLES for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

## Special.

MANY of the letters received by me during the past week have contained two inquiries which it would be discourteous to postpone answering. Both do honor alike to the hearts and heads of the writers. The first is concerned with the position of Mrs. Foote.

Those who have written fully realise that the leaders of a cause such as ours are not likely to leave those dependent upon them—to use a common phrase, "provided for," and the object of their inquiry is patent. To that question I can only reply now that I hope to make a full statement on that head in the course of two or three weeks—just so soon as Mr. Foote's affairs are sufficiently cleared up to admit of my doing so. But there is no cause for immediate anxiety, otherwise I should have more to say at once.

The second inquiry is as to the future of the *Freethinker*. That, too, I must postpone answering, beyond saying that readers need be under no concern here. The *Freethinker* will be kept going. Meanwhile, until some definite statement is made to the contrary, I continue the editorship of the paper, which has, indeed, been in my hands for the past twelve months.

Friends will also please note that the President's Honorarium Fund is now closed. It was really a *Freethinker* Sustentation Fund, as whatever came in went to the support of the paper, but one cannot keep a President's Honorarium Fund alive now that the President is no more.

On each of these points I am hoping to make an early and a full statement. In the meantime, I may be permitted to point out that there is now a golden opportunity for well-wishers to the paper to secure new readers, and so render substantial help.

C. COHEN.

## Sugar Plums.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (Oct. 31) at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. His subject, "George Meredith on the Nature and the Joy of Life," is one that should attract large numbers of people, and it is one with which Mr. Lloyd is particularly fitted to deal. He is as great a lover of Meredith's poetry as was G. W. Foote, and the present occasion would be a good one for Freethinkers to introduce their Christian friends to the movement.

We ran out of print last week, which was from one point of view regrettable, but from another a good augury for the future. This week we are printing a much larger supply, as we anticipate a still greater demand for this issue. In some respects the present number is more than a mere issue of a weekly journal. The character of its contents makes it a unique event in the history of the *Freethinker*, and one that is never very likely to occur again. It is in truth a memorial to its founder and editor for so many years, and the many tributes paid him from so many quarters, and from men so varied, makes it an issue that is likely to create a demand for it for months to come. In that belief we have printed a sufficiently large number to meet this more permanent demand.

The portrait on our front page is the last taken of Mr. Foote. It is the one that his family prefer to any other, and in this respect we agree with them. At any rate, we have been guided in our selection by their preference. In other respects we have tried to make this week's *Freethinker* worthy of its late editor, and we hope that his many admirers will think that we have done all that could be expected in so short a time. More, of course, might have been done with greater time before us, but death chooses not the time of its coming, and in this instance it approached with flying feet. Everything had to be done under very great pressure, and with so many other things to do and consider, we are quite sure that everyone will feel indulgent to any shortcomings that may be detected.

We are making arrangements for a reproduction in two forms of the portrait of Mr. Foote on our front page. One will be printed on toned plate paper, the other as finely produced a cabinet photograph as can be procured. Full particulars will be given next week.

This week the *Freethinker* bears a different appearance from what is usual. For the first time in thirty-five years, the familiar "Acid Drops" column is absent. The personal tributes have been so numerous, that we were obliged to sacrifice this much-appreciated feature. As it is, far more remain on our hands than we have dealt with. Some of these arrears we hope to clear off next week, when we shall resume our usual special articles, paragraphs, etc. And, again, we must ask the indulgence of everyone whose communications remain—for the time—unanswered.

We have to thank the *Literary Guide* for the spontaneous offer to reprint Mr. R. S. Pengelly's article on G. W. Foote. Mr. C. T. Gorham, Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association, and who was present at the funeral of Mr. Foote, also writes under date of October 22:—

"Permit me personally to say that the simple, dignified, and touching service yesterday was a fitting tribute to the memory of so valiant a fighter for liberty as the late Mr. Foote. I was much impressed."

Resolutions expressing deep regret at the death of Mr. Foote and sympathy with Mrs. Foote have been received from the Leicester Secular Society, and the Birmingham, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and West Ham Branches of the National Society. We do not reprint these here, as they are of necessity of a formal and almost identical character, although there is no question of their sincerity in testifying to their devotion to the late President.

Mr. Sydney Gimson's numerous friends will hear with sympathy that his son has been severely wounded in the fighting in France. Mr. Gimson has been summoned to France to his son's sick bed, otherwise our readers would have had the pleasure of reading a communication from one of Mr. Foote's oldest friends.

On the journey of the motor-hearse, containing Mr. Foote's remains, from Westcliffe-on-Sea to Ilford, it was accompanied by "Mimnermus." "Mimnermus," who resides at Southend, has been untiring in his services during Mr. Foote's illness, and has worked with even greater energy since his death. Where "G. W. F." was concerned, no labor has seemed too arduous. He had no more sincere admirer while living, none more faithful now that he is dead.



By R. S. PENGELLY.

THE death of Mr. George William Foote removes a great personality from the freethought world and a brave soldier from the battlefield of Reason. To those of us who were young Freethinkers thirty years ago his name is inextricably linked with that of Charles Bradlaugh. How our hearts thrilled in the memorable days of the "eighties," when Charles Bradlaugh was battering at the gates of Parliament as with the hammer of Thor, and George William Foote was facing ermined superstition across the spikes of the Old Bailey dock. Shall we ever forget the name of "North"—going down to history with that of Jeffries? Could we ever forget that splendid sentence of defiance that the prisoner flung from the dock at the Thing in Ermine on the judgment seat who sentenced him to twelve months' hard labor—"Thank you, my Lord; the sentence is worthy of your creed"? It was probably the most withering retort that any "blasphemer" ever made since Jesus stood before the tribunal of Caiaphas.

The prisoner maintained in the cell the defiance of the dock. The atrocities of our prison system—then at their height—never wrung from him a cry for mercy, or a word of apology or regret. He came out of the furnace as hard as a diamond, with a resolution even more bitter than when he entered it. The *Freethinker*, the journal which he founded in 1881, continued to ridicule the dominant creed in the same mocking spirit as of old, and the bigots never dared to prosecute it again. What wonder, then, that to us who lived in those days Bradlaugh and Foote were the giants—the "great twin brethren" who fought together. It is true that they had not always seen eye to eye, and that the younger man had been too bitter in his criticisms. But as Paul, who at Jerusalem "withstood Peter to his face," has been linked by Christian piety with his great Judæo-Christian rival, so we, the young men of that day, will never cease to bear in our hearts the image of those two paladins of freethought.

As we all know, there were Freethinkers who did not approve of Mr. Foote's controversial methods; but I am not concerned with that question to-day: let the dead past bury its dead. There were two supreme things which George William Foote did for us who breathe the conventionally free air of England, and for those two things we owe him our thanks: he shattered the old law of blasphemy into fragments, and he established for ever the principle of the liberty of bequest. His first trial on March 5, 1883, had resulted in Judge North's savage sentence, but it brought the humane instincts of mankind right up against the iniquity of such a law and such a sentence. The result was that the petition for the release of Mr. Foote was signed by such eminent men as G. J. Romanes, Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Edward Clodd, Charlton Bastian, G. H. Darwin, E. B. Tylor, Tyndall, George du Maurier, Dr. Fairbairn, Guinness Rogers, Ray Lankester, Leslie Stephen, and a host of others whose names, though they did not move the iron arm of Sir William Harcourt, the Home Secretary, yet sensibly affected the public mind. But even more important in its public bearing was Mr. Foote's second trial before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, who displayed on the judgment seat both courtesy and sympathy. Indeed, his grave reference to "the striking and able speech which you have just heard from the defendant" was one of those touches of human nature that affected even the iron man who stood before him.

Lord Coleridge's contribution to the law on that occasion was the famous ruling which laid down the doctrine that even the fundamentals of Christianity might be attacked provided the decencies of controversy were maintained. It did not entirely rid us of the Blasphemy Laws, but it confined their operation in the characteristic English way to the vulgar and the uncultured. It also enabled Mr. Foote many years later to found the Secular Society, Limited, which, as we all know, has recently been

held by the unanimous judgment of the Court of Appeal to be a valid object of bequest. The example which was thus set has been followed by the Rationalist Press Association, and it is a peculiar pleasure to its Directors that the legal validity of their constitution and that of the Secular Society should have been established by so authoritative a tribunal a few weeks before Mr. Foote's death. The Secular Society was his child; he never despaired of its future; and although he was unable to be present in court to witness its justification, he lived to receive the congratulations of all sections of the Freethought Party—congratulations that we know he appreciated and cordially welcomed.

These, then, were services which it would be difficult to overestimate, and no future historian of freethought in this country can overlook these contributions to our common liberties. But Mr. Foote has also a claim upon his generation as an orator, as a master of vigorous English, pure and undefiled. He possessed a singularly logical mind, and his lectures were rich intellectual feasts. No doubt he suffered in general reputation from the resentment which "Comic Bible sketches" aroused thirty years ago. The Christian public had made up its many-cylindered mind that he was a mere vulgar railler, and it refused to realise that he was a scholar, a Shakespearean student, a man of widest reading and of keenest insight. We who knew him better will not readily forget in an age of charlatans and boomsters the trenchant articles which, in his prime, he contributed to his journal. May we not say of his, as Browning said of Voltaire's pen?—

The sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed  
To death Imposture through the armor-joints.

He was not a rapid writer, but a careful one. A true Bohemian, he would put off the task to the last moment, and write many an article with the "printer's devil" waiting at his elbow to take it slip by slip to the printer. But it was worth waiting for—exquisite calligraphy and perfect phrasing. No writer of our day needed to make so few "author's corrections" in his proofs. Mr. Foote knew what he wanted to say, and in the most direct, almost Elizabethan English, he said it. There were those who found his style cold, but it was always keen and straight and true, and that is the kind of steel of which the world just now stands much in need. If any proof were requisite of his mastery of English, it would be in the appreciation of George Meredith, who, up to the end of his life, constantly corresponded with him. He sent Mr. Foote, when in Holloway Gaol, a copy of his poems, and he more than once contributed to the support of what he described as "the best of all causes." That was a recognition of which Mr. Foote was always proud, and it was well earned.

His public speeches were as direct and as clear as his articles. Long practice before audiences all over the country had made him a matchless debater. His lecture tour in the United States with the late Mr. Charles Watts not only enabled him to make the acquaintance of Colonel Ingersoll at the latter's beautiful home, but to spread the light across the American continent. Mr. Foote's earliest experiences in debate were gained at the Hall of Science in Old Street. He came up from Plymouth in January, 1868, a lad of eighteen, who had, as he afterwards wrote, "plenty of health and very little religion." He entered the orbit of Mr. Bradlaugh in 1870, became a contributor to the *National Reformer*, and by the year 1871 was Secretary of the old Republican League, which, with Mr. Bradlaugh as President, held its first conference at Birmingham. When the General Election of 1874 was sprung on the country, Mr. Bradlaugh was lecturing in America, and Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. Foote had to go down to Northampton to conduct the election for him in his absence. Although he was such a magnificent debater, Mr. Foote had not much real aptitude for political work. He was too straightforward for some of the politicians, and too indolent for the others. He did good work on the Metropolitan Radical



Federation; but in his later years he subordinated everything to the cause of freethought. As our readers know, he succeeded Mr. Bradlaugh as President of the N. S. S. before the latter's death, and he remained that office to the last. He was very proud of the "apostolic succession," and always gave of his best ungrudgingly to the Movement. Like Mr. Bradlaugh, he was hampered all his life by financial difficulties, and but for them he might have impressed himself more deeply upon the world as distinct from the freethought public. And so we leave him to his rest sleep. Mistakes he made—they are the lot of humanity. But he never quailed before God or man, and, dying poor, has yet bequeathed to us all the golden legacy of his courage and his talents.—From the *Literary Guide*.

By H. SNELL.

I HAVE known Mr. Foote more or less intimately since his imprisonment in 1883, and now that he is dead the world for me cannot be quite the same place. For, to those of us who had been associated with him in the earlier phases of the Freethought Movement, Mr. Foote preserved the memories of those stimulating, if bitter, days. Somehow I never thought of him in connection with the future, for his intellect, his character, his signally loyal devotion to an unpopular cause and the type of heroism that he represented, all seemed to belong to a previous generation. He was not an old man as years go, but constant worry, the strain of early propagandist effort, and privation got the best of the argument he at both ends, and it went out before its natural time. Mr. Foote paid the price of the pioneer, and he would himself have wished for no better epitaph. Those of us who knew him well wished for him the privilege of a few years of serene leisure among the people that were his most intimate friends, in order that he might have summed up the work of his life and expressed his wishes for the future. But Nature has no sentiment, and she reaps where she will.

This is not the time nor the place to attempt an estimate of Mr. Foote's life and work, or to ask ourselves about the place that he holds in our thoughts and affections. Others will do that later. Something, however, we can say that leisured thinking will never alter. Wherever the interests of Freethought were concerned, he was as straight and true as a drawn sword, and neither the privations of his calling nor the disdain of the lofty sceptics, whose liberty such as he had won, deflected him by a hair's breadth from his duty as he saw it. Mr. Foote's courage cannot be questioned by any man.

Those who had the privilege of his friendship know that no more inexcusable outrage was ever perpetrated than the picture painted of him by a section of the adder-tongued advocates of Christian Evidence in the London parks, and the public antipathy to his name was the measure of their success as defenders of the religion of love. Let us try to forget, even if we cannot forgive, them.

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Mr. Foote's chief interest of late years, outside the immediate work of the National Secular Society, was in connection with the Secular Education League, which had his most enthusiastic support, and I have always thought that his association with that body represented one of the joys of his declining years. For the first time he was brought into close comradeship with men of his own intellectual standing, with whose religious views he had no sort of sympathy, but between whom there grew a close

bond of friendship and sympathetic trust. Whenever a matter of policy had to be defined Mr. Foote's chief concern was lest a word or a bias should convey the least sort of reflection upon the religious opinions of any section of the realm, and in his punctilious regard for complete neutrality, his religious colleagues would genially chaff him at being more orthodox than they.

Throughout the work of the League his friendship with them had gone on increasing, and it was a delight to notice that, without the slightest disloyalty to convictions on either side, both sides vied with each other in the recognised courtesies that exist between English gentlemen, and on the day that I heard of his death I had paid into its account a contribution from him to the League's funds.

I wonder what our friend's wish about the future would be could he now tell us? Shall we be wrong if we assume that most of all he would wish his work to be carried on with greater vigor?

By ARTHUR B. MOSS.

BY the death of our friend and colleague, George William Foote, we have not only lost a great warrior in the cause of Freethought and intellectual honesty, but a real champion in all the great movements that make for human progress. I had the great pleasure and privilege of meeting Mr. Foote as far back as 1876, and I have enjoyed his friendship for close upon forty years. A ripe scholar, a deep thinker, a skilful logician, and a brilliant orator, he added to these great accomplishments and natural gifts, that of a gentle and generous nature that attracted and charmed all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

As a man, he was a good husband, a kind and loving father. He believed in the republic of the fireside. He was devoted to his wife and children, and they, in turn, idolised him.

His mind was analytical and catholic, and he took a large view of human life and judged men and things in the light of a very comprehensive view of nature. He had imagination, but it was always under the control of reason. A most accomplished critic, he never judged men by a narrow rule, and was always ready to concede the highest and best of motives to those with opinions to which he was utterly opposed.

He was a great lover of poetry, and was capable, at times, of writing verse of great power and pathos. A great Shakespearean scholar, with a keen appreciation of the poetry of Shelley, Byron, Burns, and many others who have lit up the world with their joyous songs of freedom and humanity. Further, he was a great admirer of the novels of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy, also the bosom friend of James Thomson (B.V.), the poet, and one of the few men who understood Thomson thoroughly. But, best of all, we admire our friend because he was a great champion of the cause of intellectual freedom and himself a real hero and martyr of Freethought.

Those who remember the splendid speeches he made at his two trials at the Old Bailey for blasphemy, before Mr. Justice North, and how the Judge told the jury that Mr. Foote had "prostituted his great talents to the service of the Devil," will think to-day of the courage with which he faced the Judge, when the sentence of twelve months' imprisonment had been passed upon him, and said, in a firm and unfaltering voice, "Thank you, my lord; the sentence is worthy of your creed."

On that occasion he was fighting for the intellectual liberty of every man who desires to liberate his mind from the slavery of a wicked and cruel superstition. And we think again of his grand oration before Lord Coleridge, which not only won the praise of the Judge himself, but which led to the celebrated judgment that the fundamental doctrines of Christianity might be attacked, provided it was done in decent and moderate language. That was a great achievement for Mr. Foote, and a still greater



achievement for the Party of which he was the leader. Upon that judgment three judges have since upheld the decision that the Secular Society, Ltd., is a perfectly legal instrument for receiving the legacies of Freethinkers.

We admire the work of Mr. Foote, because he fought for all the great causes of human advancement and well-being, for secularising all the institutions of the State—for peace and against all forms of oppression. As a leader, he was strong with the strength of conviction; as a man he was gentle and generous to a fault; as a warrior, fighting for a noble cause, he was a hero; and upon his brow we place the crown of glory.

### Mr. Foote's Funeral.

*His Colleagues' Speeches.—Special Report.*

BY C. E. S.

FREETHINKERS travelled from all parts to the City of London Crematorium, Ilford, on Thursday, to pay their last tribute of respect to their late leader, George William Foote. The body was conveyed from Westcliff-on-Sea by motor-hearse, and the members of the family travelled by rail, numbers of friends coming long distances. Orations were given at the Crematorium building, which was crowded, by Mr. C. Cohen and Mr. J. T. Lloyd, both of whom spoke with much feeling. A number of representatives of advanced societies were present, besides a gathering of what may be called the Old Guard of freethought. Seldom has Mr. Cohen spoken with such pathos as he did on this solemn occasion, and many of the auditors were affected to tears.

Mr. Cohen said words were difficult when the heart was heavy with grief and the brain benumbed by such a blow. Freethought in this country had been so long identified with George William Foote that it was almost inconceivable without him. Great ideas survive great men, as great ideas make great men. From the very first, when young Foote came to London, his sympathies were always with advanced thought. Soon he was recognised as a man of unusual ability. For forty-five years he gave himself almost wholly to freethought. Others have given part of their time and a portion of their possessions to freethought, and honor be to them, but Foote gave himself wholly. He lived for freethought, and everything else was subordinate. He was the incarnation of the fighting spirit of Liberty.

Leadership of the Freethought Party was arduous. Pertinacity, patience, and optimism were requisite. Foote was never disheartened. Under no illusions as to the present, he was under no despair for the future. Looking through the *Freethinker* at the office one day with him, I made a half-joking remark concerning the paper. He held up the volume, almost as though it were a living thing, and said: "It will arrive some day." He knew that in his time or in the coming time the world would come round to his opinion. He was as broad as humanity. Even clergymen wrote to him in hours of trouble. He was a big man with big views, and he bestrode his world like a colossus.

With his talents, had he chosen political life as a sphere of action, there was no place he could not have gained. He had no desire for fame, position, or power. Freethought has called great men to her service, but there are not many that the future will look upon with greater pride than upon G. W. Foote. The voice that thrilled thousands is silent, and that wonderful pen which taught profound truths with such simplicity of language that superficial listeners sometimes overlooked the depth of thought from which they arose, are both gone, and we are left with a tradition, a memory, and an inspiration of a brave soldier who fought many an arduous battle. He was never deaf to any appeal made to him where principle was involved. Surrounded by libellers, no single word had ever been said against his home life, which was entirely admirable and im-

peccable, and the sympathy of all Freethinkers will go out to his wife and children. To them we can only offer our respectful sympathy, and trust that time, the great healer, will transform their bitter sorrow into a sweet and homely memory. Ever will he be an inspiration, a great man fighting a great fight in a great cause.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd followed with a memorable speech. He said there were consolatory thoughts even at such a time. Death was dissolution, not annihilation. Death was change; Nature knows no annihilation. Death leaves behind a complete life which remains a fact, which nothing can destroy. Our great leader's life is now the property of all. What a busy, crowded career it was. The *Freethinker* is a loved child of his which survives him, and is carried on by earnest men who share his views. The master-stroke of his career, however, was the incorporation of the Secular Society, Limited, which had ensured the rights of citizenship to Freethinkers. In his life he was an orator and wit of abounding vitality, but in the higher sense he has inherited immortality. George Meredith, the greatest writer of our generation, was loyal to Foote for thirty years, and encouraged him in the dark hours, and congratulated him in the bright ones. To adapt Meredith's fine lines, to those who knew George William Foote, his name was written in flame. Our Leader will do better service now than even in laborious life.

Among those present were Mr. Alward (Grimsby), Mr. Herbert Barrows, Mr. and Mrs. Bowman, Mr. and Mrs. Brandes, F. A. Davies, Messrs. Deane, Evans (North London Secular Society), Elstob (Newcastle), Ford, Fincken, C. T. Gorham (Rationalist Press), F. J. Gould, W. Heaford, Thomas Ireland, Collett Jones, Judge, Miss Kough, Messrs. S. Leason (Leicester), Walter Lloyd, Leate, "Mimmerms," A. B. Moss, Dr. Nichols, Mr. and Mrs. J. Neate, S. M. Peacock (Newcastle), Mr. and Mrs. C. Quinton, V. Roger, R. Rhodes (Chatham), Mr. and Mrs. Rollit, R. H. Rosetti, Reeve (Bradlaugh Fellowship), Harry Snell, S. H. Swinny, Miss Stanley, Mr. and Mrs. Samuels, Mrs. Shepherd, Captain and Miss Taylor, J. T. Thurlow, Miss Vance, and many others, including three representatives from South Wales.

### Tributes from Far and Near.

IT is a sheer impossibility to deal at length with all the expressions of sorrow at the death of Mr. Foote, and of sympathy with his wife and family. Telegrams and letters have arrived in shoals both at this office and at Mrs. Foote's private residence. They are so numerous that we cannot even record the names, and we are merely making a selection from those received—if we may be permitted to call a selection a more or less haphazard "grab" from a perfect monument of letters and telegrams. We must, therefore, ask the indulgence of all, and assure those who are not named that their communications are not the less valued on that account. It will be a further favor if those who have written direct to Mrs. Foote will take this as a grateful acknowledgment of their extremely sympathetic communications.

Mr. Halley Stewart, the well-known Nonconformist and Mr. Foote's colleague on the Secular Education League's Executive, writes:—

DEAR MR. COHEN,—With deep regret I have read the announcement of Mr. Foote's death, and I am sorry that an attack of lumbago will prevent me from attending the funeral to-day.

I had no personal acquaintance with him until we met in the Committee Room of the Secular Education League. There I soon came into close touch with him. We were usually associated in preparing or revising the literary work of the League, especially in sub-committees, which often consisted of but two members, Mr. Foote and myself; my appointment to collaborate with him being no doubt largely due to my pronounced Free Churchmanship. The platform of the League is broad and welcomes all who seek to secure State neutrality



towards religion in State-supported schools. In our united work, which necessitated keen discussion of matters both of great breadth and minute detail, Mr. Foote grew in my esteem and regard. Never a word fell from his pen or lips that wounded in the slightest degree any theological or ecclesiastical prepossession of mine. And is it not a tribute to the League's real Catholicity that it has power to foster and evoke the true spirit of patriotism and humanity, and to command men of widely divergent views in the domain of religion, so as to unite them cordially and loyally in a common service of the State?

Through the death of our friend the League is deprived of one who was conspicuous for clear apprehension of fundamental principles and the forcible expression of them. These qualities combined with his unflinching and untiring demand for equal justice to every citizen on the broad ground of religious equality, enabled him to render invaluable service in the cause of a truly national system of education, and by his removal we have sustained a loss that is irreparable.

Yours very truly,  
HALLEY STEWART.

October 21, 1915.

The Secular Society, Limited's, Solicitor writes:—

It is with sincere regret that I have learnt of Mr. G. W. Foote's death, and perhaps you will kindly convey my sympathy to his family and his many friends. My acquaintance with Mr. Foote was unfortunately brief, but I saw sufficient of him to appreciate his virility of mind and his grasp of essential matters. In one thing I am glad—and he must have been so too—that he should have lived to see the Court of Appeal uphold the constitution of the Secular Society, Limited, which, with wonderful foresight, he had founded so many years previously. In coming to their decision, the Court refused to be bound by mediæval doctrines, and their judgment will certainly be referred to as a milestone on the road to freedom of thought and discussion.

The gentleman who veils his identity under the initials "E. B." writes:—

In the death of our Protagonist, the cause of Free-thought all over the world has experienced an irreparable calamity.....The speech of Socrates seems eminently fitted to describe Mr. Foote's life: "I know not what death is—it may be a good thing, and I am not afraid of it. But I do know that it is a bad thing to desert one's post, and I prefer what may be good to what I know to be bad."

A very old admirer of Mr. Foote's, P. W. Madden, writes on behalf of himself and wife:—

Since my first acquaintance with Mr. Foote, I could but hold him in high esteem, and the absence of his guiding hand and wise counsel will doubtless be felt by the Free-thought movement, for which he labored so unselfishly over a period of so many years.

Mr. F. W. Walsh, that brave, cheerful soul who writes from a bed to which he is permanently confined, and so afflicted that he can write only by holding a pencil between his teeth, sends a truly touching letter, in which he says:—

Words just now must be few, but his brave and loyal heart will live on to inspire us to carry on the work to which he dedicated his life. He fought the good fight with all his strength, and gave royally his sympathy and affection to me. I know how often I was in his thoughts and now that he is gone I shall always treasure the great privilege I had in being admitted to his friendship. He is not dead; he lives and reigns in the hearts of all who loved him.....As I write his portrait looks down on me saying "courage."

Mr. and Mrs. John Glendenning wire to Mrs. Foote:—

Deepest sympathy with your and the world's great loss.

Mrs. A. W. Hutton (Newcastle-on-Tyne), writes:—

My admiration for Mr. Foote was very great. He was so brave and noble. The Freethinkers of England have lost not only a scholar but a "hero." I have never swerved from my thought of G. W. Foote as a great leader of men.

Mr. Guy Alward (Grimsby), wires:—

Deepest sympathy from myself and wife and family. The Grimsby Freethinkers, with others, mourn the death of their leader.

Mr. A Lye wires Mrs. Foote:—

Coventry Freethinkers express sincere sympathy with you in the loss of your noble husband.

Mr. J. J. Bartram (Newcastle-on-Tyne), writes that the news of Mr. Foote's death has come as a shock to his many friends, and sends the sympathy of Newcastle Freethinkers to Mrs. Foote.

From an officer in the trenches:—

A few lines in great haste to tell what a severe shock many of us out here felt when we learned the sad news of the death of that splendid old veteran, G. W. Foote. With his passing, we seem to lose the last of the Old Guard, who fought such a desperate battle for liberty of thought during the last century. They nobly suffered and struggled that we might enjoy freedom, and in that fight set aside all chances of worldly and pecuniary considerations. Will you kindly convey to Mr. Foote's sorrowing family the expression of my respectful and sincere sympathy?

The following resolution has been forwarded from the Secular Education League:—

The Executive Committee of the Secular Education League hereby places on record their deep sorrow at the great loss which they have sustained in the death of their esteemed colleague and friend, Mr. G. W. Foote, who had been a member of the Committee since its formation in 1907, and bear their testimony to the loyal, disinterested, and able service which he rendered to the League, and to the unfailing courtesy and zeal which marked his advocacy of the principles on which the League is founded, and beg to assure Mrs. Foote and her children of their sincere sympathy in their great bereavement.

At a specially convened meeting of the National Secular Society's Executive, the following resolution was passed:—

That this Executive of the National Secular Society learns with profound regret of the death of its President, Mr. G. W. Foote, and desires to place on record its deep sense of the loss incurred by the Free-thought world by the death of one who has so ably led the forces of advanced Free-thought for twenty-five years.

It further desires to place on record its admiration of a life so exclusively devoted to a cause which has involved so much hardship and self-sacrifice in its pursuit.

This Executive also tenders to Mrs. Foote and family its sincere sympathy with them in their bereavement, and trusts that the recollection of George William Foote's unselfish life may serve as some consolation on the occasion of their heavy loss.

A similar resolution was passed by the Board of the Secular Society, Limited.

Mr. H. S. Salt, Secretary of the Humanitarian League, writes Mrs. Foote:—

DEAR MRS. FOOTE,—I send a line to say with what very deep regret I have read the news of Mr. Foote's death.

During the many years of my acquaintance—I hope I may say my friendship—with him, I have felt the greatest admiration and respect for his high intellectual powers and his devotion to the cause of freedom. I propose to say something on this subject in the journal of the Humanitarian League.—With much sympathy, I remain, Yrs. very truly,  
HENRY S. SALT.

(To be continued.)

Obituary.

With regret I have to record the death of another old Secularist, Mr. Wm. Priestley, draper and general dealer, at the age of seventy-five years, of the Huddersfield Branch. He had been ailing for some time with a very painful complaint. At all times a plain, blunt, and outspoken man, he never called a spade "an implement of agriculture." During the strenuous times of Messrs. Bradlaugh and Foote's struggles, over thirty years ago, his enthusiasm was unbounded on behalf of our late leader and the movement in general. During the last few years he identified himself with the Socialist movement in its active propaganda. His wishes for a Secular funeral was duly carried out to the letter by his only son, and our ever good friend Mr. A. B. Wokefield, of Hipperholme, conducted the beautiful Secular Service at Huddersfield Cemetery on Saturday, October 16. —W. H. SPIVEX.



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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, 51, 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, 62 Farringdon-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..... 19.....

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 incommensurate 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.

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